Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party April 1978 35 pence

Paul Fauvet Four Years on: The Portuguese Revolution

Alan Booth Political Strategy and Community Action

Danny Connor and Bernie Passingham The Role of Shop Stewards

Dave Laing Interpreting Punk Rock

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

Volume 22, Number 4

Editor Martin Jacques

Editorial Board

Irene Brennan/Gabriel Carritt
Jack Cohen/John Foster/Alan Hunt
Arnold Kettle/Betty Matthews
Bert Pearce/Dave Priscott
Mike Seifert/Sue Slipman
George Wake/Nick Wright/Dave Wynn

Editorial Correspondence
Martin Jacques, 16 King Street, WC2E 8HY

Advertisements
Doris Allison, above address

Orders and Subscriptions
Usual Agents or Central Books Ltd., 37 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8PS

Subscription Rates
£4.50 per annum UK and Eire
£5.25 per annum Abroad

CONTENTS

	Editorial Comments	97
Paul Fauvet	Four Years On: The Portuguese Revolution	101
Alan Booth	Political Strategy and Community Action	111
Interview: Danny Connor and Bernie Passingham	The Role of Shop Stewards	118
Dave Laing	Interpreting Punk Rock	123

MAY: SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE EVENTS OF 1968

Eric Hobsbawm	1968 — a retrospect
Interview with a leader of the French Communist Party on the May Events	
Liz Hodgkin	The Tet Offensive in Vietnam
Jon Bloomfield	The Prague Spring Reassessed
Dave Triesman	Aspects of Britain in 1968

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editorial Comments

LABOUR-COMMUNIST RELATIONS

Since the 35th Congress of the Communist Party a discussion has been taking place in *Labour Weekly* on Communist-Labour relations. It was initiated on November 25 by John Spencer, the secretary of a Labour Party branch in North London, who argued the Communist Party's adherence to "multi-party parliamentary democracy and the maintenance of freedoms of assembly and expression" removed a hindrance to the Labour Party having the benefit of the activity and initiative of Communist Party members. The following week a contributor added the *Morning Star's* value as an asset to be considered when discussing Labour-Communist unity.

John Spencer and other contributors to the discussion have referred to the unity which already exists between Communists and Labour Party members in local campaigns, the trade unions and in the student world. Mike Jackson, the chairman of the National Organisation of Labour Students, after outlining the positive value of joint work in the student movement between Labour and Communist students, added: "What is required is commitment by Labour Party members to co-operate with other significant forces of the left, including the Communist Party, to advance socialist ideas and thereby create a dialogue that itself will determine whether the place for Communists is within the Labour Party or outside it."

Needless to say the opponents of Communist-Labour unity have not been silent, but it is noticeable that, being unable to argue a reasoned case, they have done little more than rehash the anti-Communist propaganda produced for many years by Labour's right-wing and the capitalist press.

The fact that this discussion is taking place among Labour activists in the Labour press is in itself very significant. In the short time since it commenced it has revealed the extent to which unity would strengthen the left forces within the Labour Party and that despite official proscriptions in many areas of political life united action is taking place and is flourishing.

The Communist Party, while consistently maintaining the need for the unity of the labour movement, has not specified the particular form this should take—rather, only actual political developments can determine this. Its view was put in the columns of *Labour Weekly* by Reuben Falber: "unity can be realised by campaigning together around those questions on which we are in agreement". This point was made in response to a contributor who, while supporting the advocates of unity, pointed to some obstacles arising from Labour Party rules. In his contribution Reuben Falber did suggest rule changes which would restore to the trade unions their democratic right to elect to Labour Party conferences and committees delegates of their own choice.

The labour movement is indebted to the editor of *Labour Weekly* for encouraging this debate. It comes at a time when the Conservative Party, under its most reactionary leadership for many years, is mounting an offensive against Labour and has no scruples in moving significantly closer to the policies and language of the ultra-right, including the National Front. These circumstances make Labour-Communist unity in action all the more imperative.

THE LIBERAL PARTY

The Liberal Party now stands at the highest peak of power it has attained since before the last World War, its parliamentary pact with the government enabling its leaders to gain a more decisive say in the formation of a Labour government's policies than Labour backbenchers, despite its numerically insignificant presence of 13 MPs.

In the year or so since the pact was formed on March 23, 1977, they have joined with the right-wing majority in the Cabinet in shelving the outstanding commitments in Labour's manifesto for nationalisation and extended public ownership; enthusiastically endorsed the successive measures to toughen pay policy and assisted in firming up the plans for a stage 4; the Bill for direct elections to the Common Market assembly is being passed at the speed they have demanded; and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now as their latest bonus, a hitherto exclusively Liberal policy—that of profit sharing—has been adopted and will feature among the proposals in this April's budget.

Moreover, their spokesmen have special daily access to individual ministers, exercising particular influence over economic issues like taxation, public expenditure and industrial strategy in direct conflict with Labour's Programme 1976 and Labour Party conference decisions.

The Liberals can certainly point to a large constituency in the country as a basis for their claim to be entitled to a share in power. They represent a quite sizeable cross-section of small business, many farmers, a substantial chunk of the professional strata, and a radical student wing. On the system of full proportional representation with single transferable vote which they advocate, they could with five-to-six million votes in the 1974 elections arguably have expected to receive between 60 and 80 seats.

As testimony to their aim of permanent coalition government—pending the miracle of their own election to office—they have already declared a willingness to form a new pact with either of the two main parties to operate after the next General Election. Their conditions are 1) Acceptance of PR and 2) Endorsement of any agreement with party leaders by either the Parliamentary Labour Party or the Tories' 1922 committee, whichever party forms the next government.

However, such interesting possibilities might never arise since so far the electorate has reacted very unfavourably to the present pact. The class composition of Liberal support, as outlined above, suggests that their best hopes when Labour is in office come from the "floating" vote in the disaffected middle strata, and from Tory defections in the suburbs when the Conservatives are in power; polling evidence in the last 20 years, especially in by-elections, backs up this analysis. A pact with either main party cuts off these sources.

The strategy for coalition is one, nonetheless, to which they are committed for the present, and for as long at least as Mr. David Steel retains the leadership, since he sees it as the only conceivable road to a full Liberal share in government.

It was a path begun under Mr. Thorpe, who sketched out the immediate goal in the October 1974 Liberal manifesto: "Liberals are unashamedly committed to breaking the two-party system in which the party of management alternates with the party of trade unionism. . . . Neither should ever be allowed to dominate the thinking of the government of the day."

Mr. Steel's firmer conviction and determination than Mr. Thorpe's has welded all but one or two of his troupe of prima donnas in the Commons into a sufficiently disciplined unit to achieve that "breaking of the two-party system" through the pact, and to open up a prospect of other pacts in future. As indicated earlier, a future agreement with the Tories is already a contingency plan.

The actual intended victims of the coalition strategy are the left, whose influence on the Labour leadership in parliament and in the labour movement the Liberals really do want to "break".

The second greatest achievement of the pact, said Mr. Steel in a party political broadcast on January 12, was that "it has suppressed the extreme left". Liberals could be proud they had "helped the country; curbed the left, and opened the door to Liberal ideas". And it is true; the left MPs have been sadly muted of late, even ridden roughshod over, as the government helped the Liberals with the direct election Bill toward their manifesto dream of a federated EEC "with sovereignty pooled in respect of vital political and economic tasks".

Of course the Liberals have their positive democratic and humanitarian sides to offer as assets in any alliance, with their firm enmity to apartheid and oppression internationally and vigorous stance against racism in Britain; their commitment to PR (though this is seen as another way of outflanking and outnumbering the left); their progressive role in social reforms, and their espousal of self-government.

But these were qualities the Liberals contributed before right-wing Labour entertained a deal with them covering all areas of policy-making. On the central economic questions they are and will remain enemies of organised labour. To quote their manifesto again: "A statutory (wages) policy with tough sanctions on those who break it is essential."

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE "BERUFSVERBOT"

A new dimension has been added to the attacks on democratic rights in general and against those in Western Germany likely to be attacked by the *Berufsverbot* in particular.

This has arisen from the hysterical reaction generated by the reactionary press to the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

recent hi-jacking of a Lufthansa plane, the dramatic commando-style rescue of the passengers, the murder of the West German industrialist (and former SS member) Schleyer by the Red Army Faction and the strange deaths of members of the Baader-Meinof group in Stammheim jail.

The political atmosphere whipped up in connection with these and similar events has been used to rush through new attacks on democratic rights and given rise to the most blatantly reactionary decisions in *Berufsverbot* cases, all justified by the need to combat "terrorism".

Thus a new law passed by the West German Parliament on February 17, gives the police extensive new powers—the right to search whole buildings and not merely the residences of suspected people; the physical separation of suspected terrorists from their lawyers by the erection of glass screens in prisons; the right to set up road blocks for identity checks with the additional right to detain people without identity documents for up to twelve hours.

This is paralleled by a judicial decision in the *Berufsverbot* case of Heinrich Haberlein, a religious instruction teacher and chairman of the Bavarian branch of the German Peace Union. Although the presiding judge conceded that Haberlein could not be regarded as being "hostile to the constitution", he could be said to be indifferent to it since he associated with communists in the peace movement.

Haberlein was duly victimised under the *Berufsverbot*. The judge broadened the whole basis for handing out "*Berufsverbots*" by declaring "anyone who wants to become a fully established civil servant must be a convinced anti-communist" and since anyone with the mildest of progressive views or associations is immediately labelled "communist" which, by implication, is now equated with "terrorist", the difficulties of those fighting against the *Berufsverbot* in Western Germany will be greatly increased.

A similar case is that of Peter Bruckner, Professor of Psychology at Hanover University. He was recently dismissed because he refused to sign a declaration of loyalty, not only to the Constitution, *but to the existing government and state* (our itals.) which was circulated by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science following the murder of the Federal German Attorney General Butback.

These cases make it clear that the intimidation of people for progressive political views is likely to increase even more in Western Germany and this is likely to lead to the same kind of development in other European countries.

This was well emphasised at the recent national conference, called by the Provisional Committee against the *Berufsverbot*, by both the German speaker and Professor John Saville and by both the mover and seconder of a protest resolution—Professor Eric Hobsbawm and Jack Dunn, Kent Area Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers respectively.

The Conference was attended by 63 delegates representing national trade unions, several trades councils, local branches of trade unions as well as delegates from *Berufsverbot* committees in Britain, Western Germany, Denmark and France.

It provided the basis for the development of a real movement in Britain against the *Berufsverbot* in Britain for it decided to extend the campaign of meetings, produce a pamphlet on the conference proceedings and establish machinery for providing the progressive movement with regular and up-to-date material with developments in connection with the *Berufsverbot* in Western Germany and the international struggle against it.[1]

BUKHARIN

Last month (March) saw the fortieth anniversary of the death of Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin. Born in 1888 Bukharin joined the Bolshevik Party in 1906. Both a theorist and an organiser, he was elected to its Central Committee in July 1917, and in October-November became one of the leaders of the Moscow uprising. He was appointed editor of *Pravda* in December 1917, and held this post until 1929. For a brief period in the middle twenties, after the death of Lenin but before Stalin emerged as sole leader, Bukharin reached the summit of authority as a Bolshevik. Between 1926 and 1929 he also headed the Communist International. For thirty years until his arrest in 1937 he was one of the outstanding figures of Soviet Marxism.

In 1922, shortly before he died, Lenin commended Bukharin to the party as a "most valuable and major theorist . . . the favourite of the whole party." Later identified as a leader of the "Right" opposition to Stalin, Bukharin became a defendant in one of the big Moscow show trials and was executed in

[1] Enquiries about the anti-*Berufsverbot* campaign in Britain should be sent to Hugh Latham, 6 Little Green Lane, Farnham, Surrey.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1938 as an anti-Soviet conspirator, an "enemy of the people".

Revelations since 1955 about the criminality prevalent in judicial processes in the Stalin period threw doubt on this verdict. It would be an exaggeration to say that his case was reopened, and in Soviet terms Bukharin remains on the whole an "unperson". But his guilt was no more proven than that of many others who suffered repression and were later exonerated, and in the early 1960s several historians and political figures spoke out for Bukharin's innocence.

From an historical standpoint Bukharin's role and significance have always seemed overshadowed by others. Despite a brief involvement with the Left Communists during and at the end of the Civil War, Bukharin never became a major faction leader like Kamenev and Zinoviev. On the contrary he was for many years a leader of the whole party. When he fell into disagreement with official attitudes, he played out his opposition from within the Central Committee, avoiding the role which fell to Trotsky of criticism from without. Compared with Stalin he based his politics not on militancy, shock troops and grandiose plans, but on organising the step-by-step transformation of Soviet culture from below. Many of his ideas bore similarity with those of Gramsci.

LYSENKO

In 1948 official support was given, in the Soviet Union, to Lysenko and the supporters of his biological themes of inheritance. The consequences of this episode in the relations between politics and science were enormously damaging. Apart from obstructing the development of Soviet genetics for 15 years, it was accompanied by the persecution of scientists with different scientific views to Lysenko. The affair had severe repercussions for the relationship of Communist Parties throughout the world to scientists and other intellectuals. Dominique Lecourt, in his book *Proletarian Science? The Case of Lysenko*,[2] gives a very real feel in the first chapter to the crudeness of Communist attitudes expressed, at the time, in France, and the frightening willingness of those, with no knowledge of the science concerned, to defend the "line". The bulk of his study, however, seeks from a marxist perspective to unravel and explain the process whereby Lysenkoism rose to its position of domination within Soviet science.

It is this mode of analysis which is the distinctive feature of Lecourt's work and it relies largely on two earlier studies—those of Z. Medvedev (*The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko*), and D. Joravsky (*The Lysenko Affair*)—for documentary evidence. Lecourt seeks with reasonable success to develop an explanation which avoids the emphasis found in other interpretations on individual characteristics, such as Lysenko's charletanism, or Stalin's malevolence. He identifies three distinct periods in the career of Lysenko; the first (1927-29) involving the discovery of genuine agricultural techniques, the second (1929-34) which developed the theory of his technique, and the third (1935-48) which saw the emergence of a broader theoretical system claiming to be a new science to rival classical genetics.

The key elements involved in this process are identified as a "technicism" connected to the material problems of Soviet agriculture and the dominance of an "ontological" version of marxist philosophy endorsed by the state. Lecourt examines the manner in which these elements related to the actual content of Lysenko's biological theory and were accompanied by the resurrection of Bogdanov's notion of "two sciences"—bourgeois and proletarian. The result of Lecourt's endeavour is a pungent critique of this general doctrine as well as of its specific expression in biology.

Readers of *Marxism Today* will be familiar with Louis Althusser's introductory essay *Unfinished History* whose first publication in English in this journal is not referred to in the book. Lecourt's study is a serious contribution towards the analysis of one of those episodes in the past which Althusser rightly stresses is essential to future political practice. It stands in marked contrast to that of a recent volume,[3] *Soviet Studies in the History of Science*, where Vadim Nazarov's chapter on the history of biology omits any mention even of the name Lysenko. As Althusser argues, the temptation to shrink from debate and pass on to "Next Business", to "rectify" without analysis, can only be at a continuing and heavy price.

[2] Dominique Lecourt: *Proletarian Science? The Case of Lysenko*, New Left Books, 1977 (£5.75).

[3] Institute of the History of National Science and Technology, USSR Academy of Sciences, "Soviet Studies in the History of Science", *Social Sciences Today*, Problems of the Contemporary World Series No. 53, Moscow 1977.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Four Years On: The Portuguese Revolution

Paul Fauvet

Since World War II, only one Western European country has come anywhere near an advance to socialism. That was Portugal in 1974-75. After the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship by the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) on April 25, 1974, the country appeared to slide rapidly out of bourgeois control. A wave of nationalisations broke the back of domestic monopoly capital. Workers' control was instituted in hundreds of concerns all over the country. Far-reaching measures of agrarian reform eliminated capitalist relations of production in vast rural areas in the south.

According to figures provided in the Central Committee report to the Eighth Congress of the Portuguese Communist Party (November 1976), by July 30, 1976, 245 firms had been nationalised, and in a further 200 the state held more than 50 per cent of the total capital. In another 261 firms the state had "intervened" (by appointing administrative boards, etc.), usually after the workforce had seized the factory when economic sabotage by the previous owner had led to imminent or actual bankruptcy. In other abandoned or sabotaged firms co-operatives had been set up: there were 787 of these by May 1976. Portuguese monopoly capitalism had been destroyed (though foreign capital had by and large been left untouched).

On the land, some 1,100,000 hectares in the Alentejo and Ribatejo had been seized by the agricultural workers, and were farmed in around 450 co-operatives and Collective Production Units (UCPs).

This vast "non-capitalist sector of the economy", as the PCP referred to it, set Portugal quite apart from other Western European states. Yet precious little work had been done by the British left on Portugal:[1] this is despite the obvious relevance of the ferment in the Portuguese army to current discussions about democratising the state apparatus, and of the experience of the Fourth and Fifth Provisional Governments under Vasco Goncalves to the feasibility of implementing a left, alternative economic strategy. The PCP itself is also deserving of study as the odd man out among Western Europe's mass CPs—here in Portugal was a spectacularly successful Communist Party—but one which rejected all historic compromises, Moncloa Pacts, etc., and roundly denounced what it referred to as "so-called Eurocommunism".

This article attempts to fill some of the gaps. It should be seen only as an opening for discussion, and does not attempt any definite answers. To begin with, a periodisation of the Portuguese Revolution will be useful. A series of moves by the right-wing—three failed coups and one successful one—conveniently provide this for us.

1. *April 25 (overthrow of Caetano)—July 27, 1974.* The latter was the date of President Spinola's declaration in favour of independence for the colonies, after the defeat of the palace coup in which Spinola and his Prime Minister, Palma Carlos, attempted to ditch the left from the government, install a presidential regime, and postpone elections indefinitely.

2. *July 27—September 28, 1974.* The period of decolonisation. The Republic of Guinea-Bissau was formally recognised, and the Lusaka accords on the independence of Mozambique were signed. To defeat the power of the radical officers of the MFA and their civilian allies, Spinola relied on a mass demonstration of "the silent majority". Behind this "march on Lisbon" lay plans for a right-wing takeover. On September 28, barricades went up on the approaches to Lisbon manned by soldiers and workers. The right-wing plot collapsed and Spinola resigned from the Presidency.

3. *September 28, 1974—March 11, 1975.* Dates were set for Angolan and Capverdian independence. The first land seizures took place in October in the lower Alentejo and spread to the Upper

[1] Virtually nothing from the left of an analytical nature is available on the revolution in English. The best piece is the section on Portugal in Nicos Poulantzas' *Crisis of the Dictatorships* (NLB, 1976), though this is weakened by Poulantzas' evidently exclusive reliance on secondary sources. There is a useful chapter on Portugal in Jack Woddis' *Armies and Politics* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1977). There have been two useful bulletins chronicling events as they occurred—*Our Common Struggle* (by the Portuguese Workers' Co-ordinating Committee), and the Communist Party of Great Britain's *Portugal Information Bulletin* (available from 16 King Street, WC2). A vast amount of ultra-left ephemera was produced (particularly by what was then, still IS), notable mainly for its colossal inaccuracy and arrogance.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alentejo in February. As the Revolution seemed to move inexorably leftwards, a wave of economic sabotage by the right hit industry and agriculture alike. The right-wing struck again—and failed again. Its attempted coup on March 11, involving an attack by right-wing led paratroops against the barracks of the RAL-1 artillery regiment in Lisbon, was defeated in a matter of hours.

4. *March 11—November 25, 1975.* Sweeping nationalisations took the banks, insurance companies, the steel industry, the main brewing concerns, the major transport companies, the giant CUF monopoly, the Setenave shipyards and many other enterprises under state control. The land occupations turned from a trickle to a flood, and gained official recognition in the Agrarian Reform Law of July 29, 1975.

But the right-wing counter-offensive of summer 1975, spearheaded by the Socialist Party, split the MFA, and succeeded in removing Prime Minister Vasco Goncalves. After three frenzied months (September-November) of huge demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, the emergence of a mass revolutionary soldiers' movement, and an almost total collapse of Government in Lisbon, an abortive insurrection among the Tancos paratroopers gave the right-wing within the military an excuse to stage their own coup on November 25, and smash the power of the left in the Lisbon Military Region.

5. *November 25, 1975—July 1976.* A period of relative calm. The right's attempt to turn its victory of November 25 into a definitive rout of the left was defeated. Despite its overall rightist tenor, the Sixth Provisional Government did not reverse the Agrarian Reform, and further nationalisations and state interventions in firms took place in this period. Elections on April 25 gave a clear majority in the Legislative Assembly (the Assembly of the Republic) to the Socialist and Communist Parties.

6. *July 1976—December 1977.* The "First Constitutional Government", as the Mario Soares administration proudly referred to itself, proved the most right-wing since the overthrow of Caetano. All the gains of the Revolution came under repeated attack and the greatest beneficiaries of fascism found themselves being given back their expropriated lands and factories.

The Revolution's Social Base

Three times the Portuguese Revolution lurched to the left—in July and September 1974, and March 1975: each time this was the result of a botched putsch by the right. Thanks to the right-wing's incompetent and precipitate actions, substantial sections of the state apparatus fell into the hands of the left. But this happened before a stable alliance of classes and social forces had been built which could provide a solid foundation for a new state power. The real story of the dramatic months of 1975 is of the left's failure to build such an alliance and of the right's ability to mobilise significant strata of the population against the Revolution.

The Revolution rested on a tripartite social base —the agricultural workers of the Alentejo and Ribatejo (the Agrarian Reform zone), the industrial workers of the great industrial belts round Lisbon, Setubal and, to a lesser extent, Oporto, and radicalised soldiers, sailors and officers. Missing from this alliance were large sectors of the urban petty bourgeoisie and, crucially, the small and middle farmers of the north and centre of the country. These provided both the electoral and the street support for reaction. The conservative behaviour of the northern farmers in 1975 enabled the right to raise the spectre of civil war, based on a north-south division of the country.

The conservatism of these small farmers had many causes. The majority (about 60 per cent) owned small plots of land, and a landholding peasantry is never easy to mobilise for revolution, particularly when that revolution has a marked collectivist flavour. The Agrarian Reform in the south, with the expropriation of the latifundia and the collective farming of the land, raised fears among the small farmers that they too would be expropriated. These fears were played upon and inflamed by the right-wing, and remained persistent, despite patient explanation from the PCP and the Agricultural Workers' Unions that only large landholdings would be seized.

Ideologically, the small farmers were under the massive influence of the Catholic Church, and Portuguese priests have no scruples about interfering in politics. An estimated 90 per cent of parish priests in Braga diocese, for instance, turned their sermons into political interventions the Sunday before voting in April 1976. The faithful were warned of the literally hellish consequences of voting Communist; some priests went so far as to sport emblems of the PPD and CDS[2] on their robes. Religious newspapers placed stories of persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union on their front pages immediately before the voting. The Archbishops of Braga and Leiria played a crucial role in the agitation leading up to the assault on and destruction of the PCP offices in those towns.

[2] Portugal's two main right-wing parties. The CDS (Social and Democratic Centre) is full of old-time Salazarists. The PPD (Popular Democratic Party) has now renamed itself the PSD (Social Democratic Party), but has nothing whatever to do with social-democracy.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Agrarian Reform in the North

On top of this complex of factors were also superimposed the very real difficulties faced by peasant farmers in marketing their goods and in getting a fair price for them. Right-wing demagogues could blame this on the "Communist government" in Lisbon. Ironically, the only force that provided a realistic programme for agrarian reform in the north was the PCP. The PCP's demands for the north included a system of fair rents for tenant farmers, guaranteed minimum prices for produce, a purge and simplification of the commercial circuits to get rid of parasitic middlemen, and schemes to insure small farmers against natural disasters.[3] Some of the PCP's proposals in relation to northern agriculture found their way on to the statute book during the Fifth Provisional Government. Most importantly, the Law of Rural Rents established the right of tenant farmers ("rendeiros") to a written contract, to pay their rent in money rather than kind, and to procedures whereby their rent could be reduced.

Communist Strategy

Could the PCP have done more to consolidate an alliance that could have carried the Revolution further? In particular, how much responsibility does the PCP bear for the bitter conflict with the Socialist Party in 1975, which was the essential factor precipitating the split in the MFA between Melo Antunes' "moderate" Group of Nine, and the supporters of Prime Minister Vasco Goncalves?

Critics of the PCP have talked of its "manipulative adventurism",[4] and have suggested that the PCP's strategy was to hang on to the coat-tails of the MFA, and insinuate itself into power on the backs of the military, regardless of what the masses thought.

These criticisms just don't stand up (though this doesn't mean that the PCP's behaviour was free from error). I shall deal first with the question of the army, and secondly with the Socialist Party.

The PCP's strategy was summed up in the slogan of "the alliance between the people and the MFA". Repeatedly the PCP stressed that the two component parts of the alliance should each enjoy "complete independence and autonomy",[5] and that neither should try to dominate the other. This alliance was based on a substantial reality: the overthrow of fascism had been the work of "the captains of April". They had won popular support, and they weren't going to go away. Every blunder made by the right strengthened the MFA within the military, and strengthened the left within the MFA, bringing it to ever greater prominence in national life. What were revolutionaries to do in that situation? Demand that the soldiers go back to their barracks? This was the slogan of the right, and eventually of much of the Socialist Party.

Democracy in the Armed Forces

Initially the MFA was a rather small group of lower and middle-ranking officers. But as the Revolution proceeded, the democratic surge in the army intensified. An MFA delegate body, the "Assembly of 200", met in December 1974, and then gave way to the MFA Assembly, institutionalised on March 29, 1975. Unit Delegate Assemblies (ADUs) were created, and special politicising bodies, the Unit Dynamising Groups, were established from the central Army Dynamising Cabinet. A Plenary of Naval Privates met on April 4, 1975, and three days later, for the first time, sergeants and privates participated in the MFA Assembly.

The process of democratisation in the armed forces was uneven. The navy was the most revolutionary of the forces, while the Air Force was the least affected by the left; para-military bodies such as the National Republican Guard (GNR) were barely touched in these transformations.

In the army it was COPCON (Continental Operational Command—the MFA's Praetorian Guard) and the Lisbon Military Region—complementary forces under that rare creature, an ultra-left general, Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho—that were the bulwarks of left-wing power. Within COPCON, pride of place went to RALIS, the Lisbon Light Artillery, dubbed the "Red Regiment", and the target for the counter-revolutionary attack of March 11.

Even in the Lisbon Region the left in the military was not in absolute dominance. The tanks at Santarem remained under right-wing control; so, crucially, did the Amadora Commandos. Jaime Neves, their commander, was a ferocious anti-communist, and one of the men responsible for the Wiriamu massacres in Mozambique. The left in the regiment attempted to get rid of Neves and he was voted out of command on August 1. But, fatally, the unreliable Otelo de Carvalho intervened to reinstate Neves. The triumphant Neves could install a reign of terror in his unit, then in November turn on Carvalho, since it was Neves' crack troops that were the key element in the right-wing putsch of November 25.

It seems clear that Carvalho's action in rein-

[3] The PCP had developed its position that Portugal needed two completely different Agrarian Reforms, one for the south and one for the north, over years of practical and theoretical work.

[4] Dave Purdy, *Comment*, July 9, 1977.

[5] Cunhal: *A Revolucao Portuguesa: O Passado e o Futuro*, p. 135.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stating Neves was due to the fact that the predominant left current among the commandos was the PCP, and the PCP was not much to the liking of the ultra-left general.

Victories for the Right

The reactionary offensive of late summer 1975 was spearheaded by the Melo Antunes group in the military. These left of centre officers acted in a *de facto* alliance with the military right. In a string of successes they degutted the MFA of much of its democratic content. The first significant victory for the military right was the destruction of the Fifth Division, the MFA's revolutionary propaganda unit. Jaime Neves' commandos occupied its buildings on August 27. Three days later General Vasco Goncalves was removed from his post as Prime Minister. Baying for blood the military right torpedoed the September 5 MFA General Assembly at Tancos. The MFA's highest body, the Revolutionary Council, was restructered to the right. Vasco Goncalves was purged along with eight other left-wingers. The Melo Antunistas now dominated the Council.

A crucial right-wing victory was the removal of Brigadier Euricio Corvacho, both from the Revolutionary Council and from his post as Northern Military Commander. Corvacho had been relatively isolated, surrounded by many rightists among the northern officers. He had embarked on a campaign against the right-wing terrorists in the north, attempting to dismantle their networks. This made it urgent for the right to get rid of him.

Soldiers United Will Win!

This was the background to the last great flowering of democracy within the army—the establishment of a body completely outside MFA structures, the SUV (Soldiers United Will Win)—the first revolutionary military body where the initiative had come from soldiers rather than officers. SUV set out its aims as being for improvements in soldiers' living conditions ("against starvation wages, for free transport, for common messes, against militarist discipline"), for the expulsion of reactionary officers, for functioning democracy in the barracks ("ensuring elections and democratic functioning in the ADUs, the free circulation of working-class and popular newspapers, and the holding of mass meetings of soldiers whenever we choose"), and for stronger links with organs of Popular Power such as workers' committees and neighbourhood committees.

SUV drove the right into hysterical frenzy. The PS and the PPD organised marches whose main chant was "Discipline! Discipline!". Soares referred, in a mixture of fear and loathing, to SUV as "barrack Soviets". "What," he asked, "were soldiers' and sailors' soviets taken straight out of Petrograd and Kronstadt, hardly dusted off and carrying instructions dating from 1917, doing in the Portugal of 1975?" But the SUV never pretended to be a soviet-type organisation—and it existed because of the attempt to reimpose militarist discipline, to force the army back into its traditional role as an instrument for repressing the popular masses.

The Collapse of the MFA

On November 25, that attempt succeeded: the alliance between the Melo Antunes group and the military right, and in the civilian field, between the PS and the parties of the right, triumphed, and the power of the left in the military was destroyed. Regiments such as the Military Police were disbanded, hundreds of revolutionary soldiers and officers were imprisoned, and the Revolutionary Council was restructured still further to the right.

Immediately after November 25 new splits emerged: Melo Antunes found his previous allies on the military right moving away from him. While he still tried to claim some role for the MFA in the country's political life, the "operationals" (as the leading rightist officers were dubbed) were pushing a "back to barracks" position. They won a victory on December 11 when the Revolutionary Council approved a Constitutional Law on the army. This hardly mentioned the MFA; instead it talked merely of "the Portuguese Armed Forces", and did so in highly traditional terms, speaking of the "chain of command", "esprit de corps", "cohesion and discipline", "unity of doctrine", etc. The army's political role was restricted to vague commitments to "assure the onward process of the Portuguese Revolution", and to "guarantee the conditions that permit peaceful and pluralist transition of Portuguese society to democracy in socialism". The intelligent right-wing weekly *Expresso* hailed this document as marking "The eclipse of the MFA".[6]

By 1976 all that was left of the MFA was the Revolutionary Council. With the left purged, the "operationals" directed their fire at the Melo Antunes group, who found themselves in an increasingly weak position. The army was drastically reduced in size, and began to play a much fuller part in NATO affairs.

This brief summation of the rise and fall of the MFA helps us to situate the PCP's position. What is starkly clear is that Portugal's massive steps in the direction of democracy and socialism coincided with political ferment in the barracks, and soldiers at the forefront of national politics, while

[6] *Expresso*, December 13, 1975.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hand in hand with reverses for democracy and growing repression went the crushing of the military left, and the return of the troops to a tightly disciplined life, isolated from the masses. The army did not determine the politics of the nation, as the militarist vanguardists on the ultra-left fondly imagined, but it did form a crucially important part of that politics.

An Alliance in Disarray

The alliance between the popular movement and the MFA actually worked—it underlay the defeat of Spinola's September and March coups, and won major achievements such as the nationalisations and the legal recognition of the Agrarian Reform. But the PCP's warning that the alliance could only function given "respect for the complete independence and autonomy of the two components of the revolution"[7] was well-founded. This respect broke down in summer 1975. Political parties tried to take over or degut the MFA; while sections of the military tried to direct the popular movement.

In the attempt to control the MFA all were guilty. The right-wing were out to destroy the organisation, the PS wanted to woo "moderate" sectors and precipitate a split, while the ultra-left intended to compensate for their weakness among the working class by seizing control of the Lisbon Military Region. The PCP's intervention was less blatant, and probably emerged as a response to this complex jockeying for position: but undoubtedly the PCP tried to keep the group around Vasco Goncalves in overall control of the military.

The second interference, that of the military in the popular movement, arose out of frustration with what were seen as mere squabbles between the political parties, and also out of increasing anger at the demagogy of Mario Soares and the PS. Sections in the MFA argued for a direct link with the masses bypassing both the parties and the trade unions. In a series of remarkable documents this idea took form. The MFA was Portugal's "revolutionary vanguard", or alternatively it was a "national liberation movement". Its role was to direct the masses and to substitute for the political parties who had fallen down on their job. The boldest statement of all came in the "Guide-Document" adopted by the MFA Assembly on July 8: this laid unequivocal claim to a "leading role" for the military.

The PCP later attacked this document as reflecting "the influence of petty-bourgeois radicalism on the military left".[8] That, however, was not what it said at the time. Whatever reservations it may have had, the PCP contrived to give the impression of wholehearted support for the Document, and it supported the demonstration in favour of these new MFA decisions. A close reading of the PCP Political Committee statement of July 9 does show a few phrases which might be interpreted as being mildly critical. Without openly attacking the MFA Assembly, the PCP did stress that "the mass popular movement has its own revolutionary dynamic".[9] But the PCP preferred to concentrate on the positive aspects of the Guide-Document—its demand for a new type of popular state apparatus, and its rejection of the sterile parliamentarism of the right-wing and the PS in the Constituent Assembly. Some of the underlying assumptions in the Document were close to those of the PCP in its draft for the Constitution,[10] and clearly the PCP's response was much to be preferred to right-wing denunciations of the document as a "totalitarian manoeuvre", and Mario Soares frothing at what he described as "anarcho-populism".

But the PCP's attitude here meant that it was not able to draw a clear demarcation between itself and the military left until late August, when it was forced to do so by the appearance of the "COPCON Document". This was drawn up by officers close to Otelo de Carvalho in response to Melo Antunes' "Document of the Nine": and the PCP attacked it for containing a "one-sided and destructive analysis of the revolutionary process", and for its "anti-communist references". Carvalho and others in COPCON were now attacking "political parties" indiscriminately. The feeling that "the parties" had let the revolution down was assiduously fostered by certain ultra-left organisations, notably the PRP-BR. "Non-partyism" took a firm root within COPCON, and proved a useful screen for ultra-left manipulation.

Ultra-leftism Within the Military

Any consideration of ultra-leftism within the Portuguese military must make special mention of the crass irresponsibility displayed by Carvalho himself. Few speeches during the Revolution can have wrought so much damage as his June 1975 suggestion that all the reactionaries should be put in the Lisbon bullring. Suspected of harbouring Bonapartist ambitions, Carvalho changed his tack every few days during July and August, remaining

[7] Cunhal, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[8] Cunhal, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

[9] *Avante!* July 10, 1975.

[10] The PCP's draft, and particularly Vital Moreira's attack on the rival drafts of the PS, CDS and PPD in *Por uma Constituicao Revolucionaria* (Edicoes Avante, Lisbon, 1975).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quite unpredictable except in his morbid suspicion of the PCP. He succeeded in sabotaging the short-lived triumvirate of himself, Vasco Goncalves, and President Costa Gomes: and when it was absolutely crucial that the military left should unite against the right-wing advance, Carvalho refused to support Vasco Goncalves (and indeed wrote the latter a highly insulting letter in which he forbade Goncalves to visit COPCON units), thus opening the door to the right-wing victory on September 5.

Ultra-leftism, though usually of a more consistent character, was widespread among COPCON officers. Indeed, this seems to be part of a more general phenomenon whereby a radicalised stratum of lower and middle ranking officers are prone to leftist positions, often displaying intense impatience at the alleged "backwardness" of the masses, and then trying to impose their own pace on the revolutionary process. Commanding officers in units such as the Military Police allowed all their positive work to be vitiated by this glaring streak of ultra-leftism. Crucially, the COPCON leftists failed to see who the enemy was. No distinction was made between the PS and the civilian right, and a similar confusion was made between Melo Antunes' group and the military right. Those under PRP-BR influence came close to adopting the notorious formula of the Comintern Third Period, whereby social-democrats became "social-fascists".

The PCP, certainly at leadership level, never fell into this trap. While for the ultra-left and their COPCON adherents the PS *was* the right, the PCP was careful to talk of the PS as being "allied to the right". Similarly a distinction was drawn between the Melo Antunistas and the military right: this led the PCP to try and heal splits within the MFA, and despite its harsh criticism of the two manifestos, it looked for positive aspects in both the document of the Nine and the COPCON document.[11] The ultra-left, quite logically given their analysis, tried to drive the split to a definitive conclusion. In succeeding in this they paved the way for the eventual destruction of the military left and of the MFA itself.

The PCP has criticised itself for its occasional mis-estimation of the balance of forces within the military—the most major mistake of this nature was an over-estimation of the strength of the military left in mid-1975. But despite this, on balance the PCP's attitude to the military must be judged as broadly correct. Certainly it is difficult to see what realistic alternative there was to the concept of the alliance between the people and the MFA. And when that alliance foundered in mid-1975, the advance of the revolution was blocked.

Sectarianism: Who Was Guilty?

Those who criticise the PCP's position towards the military usually link this to its alleged "sectarianism" towards the PS. Documentary evidence for this accusation is never forthcoming—and for good reason. All the published material shows repeated PCP attempts to come to agreement with the PS; these attempts have been rebuffed, and the PS has resorted spasmodically to anti-communism of the crudest kind. Thus it was the PS who as early as summer 1974 broke up the unity of the MDP (Portuguese Democratic Movement) by withdrawing their militants from it. The anti-PCP and anti-Vasco Goncalves' campaigns of mid-1975 were spearheaded by the PS. The PS refused the PCP's proposal of a grand meeting of all democratic forces, civilian and military, to hammer out a common solution to the political crisis, made in August 1975. Whenever grass-roots co-operation between socialists and communists has appeared likely to threaten its position, the PS leadership has intervened with deliberate attempts to worsen communist-socialist relations.

Social-democratic Traditions Absent

But a more fundamental argument against the critics of the PCP is that they mistake the whole nature of the Portuguese Socialist Party.

A basic fact about Portuguese politics is that it has no social-democratic tradition. The small and ineffective Socialist Party of the First Republic (1910-1926) was marginal to the labour movement (then dominated by anarcho-syndicalism) and voluntarily disbanded in 1933. Individual social-democrats opposed the dictatorship, but hardly ever as an organised force. The present Socialist Party only dates from 1973 when it was founded at a Congress in Bonn. This birth has left its scars, for the PS has always been closely linked with the German SPD, who poured money into the PS coffers in 1975.

When the Caetano regime was overthrown, it could justly be remarked that the PS consisted of "a couple of streets of Lisbon lawyers". At its Congress in December 1976, however, it could claim a membership of 93,000.[12] Like everyone

[11] In its "Declaration on the Present Political Crisis", the Central Committee argued for a process of "dialogue and understanding" rather than confrontation (*Avante!* August 28, 1975).

[12] PS membership on April 25, 1974, was an estimated 130. Official figures aren't available, but the PCP membership on the same date has been variously estimated at 2,000 and 5,000. The membership figure presented to the PCP Congress in November 1976 was 115,000.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

else on the left, the PS expanded massively in mid- and late-1974: this expansion was on a left-wing ticket, presenting Mario Soares as a consistent opponent of the dictatorship,[13] and the PS as a party determined to carry through the revolution. Perhaps the decisive recruit for the PS in 1974 was Manuel Serra, a veteran anti-fascist with much experience of Salazarist jails, who led his organisation, the Popular Socialist Movement, en bloc into the PS. This gave the PS a much-needed credibility among working-class militants.

At the end of 1974 the PS in Congress approved a lengthy programme, remarkable for its radical rhetoric. The preamble, for instance, not only stated that "the Socialist Party fights against the capitalist system and bourgeois domination", but explicitly rejected most of its partners in the Socialist International.

The PS in Action

When it came to action, however, the PS showed rather a different face. It led the massive anti-communist campaign of summer 1975. The crisis of this period was precipitated by the Socialist walkout from the Fourth Provisional Government on the pretext that the newspaper *Republica,* seized by its workers, had not been returned to its Socialist editor Raul Rego. Mario Soares then stomped the country denouncing Prime Minister Vasco Goncalves, the left in the MFA, and the Communist Party. Behind this demagogy the ultra-right began to organise their attacks on left-wing offices (particularly those of the PCP) in the north and centre of the country.

These activities attracted rather different recruits to the PS. A cartoon of summer 1975 shows a group of short-cropped, jackbooted thugs hastily altering placards from "SS" to "PS" and rushing off to join a Socialist demonstration. Perhaps not many outright fascists infiltrated the PS (some did: during the December 1976 local elections it was found that PS lists, as well as those of the right-wing parties, included former members of the Salazarist ANP), but the party had undoubtedly become attractive to those who saw it as an effective barrier to communism.

With the PS as the dominant force in the Sixth Provisional Government, and after July 1976, ruling alone, there emerged a further good reason for joining the PS—to advance one's career. Posts in the state apparatus were now used to reward PS members: a PS card came in handy for getting all manner of jobs in the state sector, while a vicious witchhunt (particularly in the Education Ministry) saw hundreds of Communists and other revolutionaries lose their jobs.

Thus membership of the PS was altogether heterogenous. It was kept under control by highly undemocratic procedures whereby a "Central Conflicts Commission" enjoyed draconian powers to discipline, suspend and expel (somewhat ironic in the light of repeated PS attacks on the alleged "Stalinism" of the PCP).

There has not been a consistent left-wing inside the PS, but rather a succession of oppositions which have withdrawn in disgust or been expelled. Despite making his mark on the radical programme of 1974, and winning up to 40 per cent of the votes at the December Congress, Manuel Serra, in an act of astounding political folly, led his group out of the PS in February 1975.

Slim Basis for Reformism

Yet in voting terms the PS remains Portugal's largest party. But these election results need careful interpretation. Do they really show mass popular support for a reformist, social-democratic position? Has the 35-40 per cent of the votes won by the PS anything in common with similar voting figures for the British Labour Party? Given the lack of a social-democratic tradition, it seems unlikely that there should be a mass conversion to social-democracy overnight. The Salazar and Caetano dictatorships had relied on force to ensure their rule and ensure the reproduction of capitalist relations—hence the battery of repressive legislation, the omnipresence of the political police, mass conscription for the colonial wars, etc. The winning of consent to the rule of capital was of much less significance than in bourgeois democracies. Which is not to say that it didn't happen, that ideology under fascism was irrelevant. But the key point for this argument is that the dominant ideological forms under the dictatorship were not those of social-democracy. Rather they were those of corporatism (diluted Mussolini), and its structures (the youth body, the Mocidade Portuguesa, the para-military Portuguese Legion, the corporate unions, etc.), of an absurdly inflated nationalism (the myth of a "pluricontinental" Portugal), and of the Catholic Church.

The Character of PS Voting Figures

Overall, it seems that the April 1975 PS vote, in the Constituent Assembly elections, was a vote for "socialism". After all, the MFA had advised

[13] Far from the truth: after Caetano's feeble measures of liberalisation in 1968-69 (amounting to little more than changing the name of the secret police), Soares stated that he considered Caetano's policy "the only one possible" (*A Nacao,* December 1968) and that he "well understood" the "cyclopean difficulties" faced by Caetano. (Interviews in Raul Rego *Escritos Politicos.* Both sources quoted Cunhal, *op. cit.*, p. 41.)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people to vote for "socialism" after the crushing of the Spinolist coup of March 11, and here was a party calling itself "Socialist". Here was also a party that could be all things to all men. In the profane south, Mario Soares could boast of his atheism: in the Catholic north he could be photographed going to mass in the cathedral town of Braga.

In subsequent elections (to the Assembly of the Republic in April and to the local authorities in December 1976) certain patterns emerged. First the PS vote dropped sharply—from 2,082,410 in 1975 to 1,815,533 in April 1976 to 1,350,379 in December 1976.[14] Thus in a year and a half the PS had lost 755,000 votes—or about a third of its electorate. Taken regionally, the figures show a considerable amount of tactical voting. In the south PS votes were frequently anti-communist votes. In the Alentejo, the PPD and CDS were most unlikely to win any parliamentary seats, so anti-communist voters were wasting their time in voting for them: to reduce Communist influence in the Alentejo it was the PS that had to be supported.

In the north, however, the PS vote often appears as an anti-fascist vote. Many voters in April 1976 seem to have calculated that since the PCP was unlikely to win seats, then their best bet for blocking the right was to vote PS. Thus the PS vote held up much better in the north than in the south and actually increased in three districts. But when it came to the local elections, much of these PS gains were lost. This was perhaps partly due to disillusionment at the record of the Soares government, but probably also to the fact that the smaller units involved in the local elections made it a more realistic option to vote for the Communists (and their allies on the FEPU[15] slate). Thus in almost all northern districts the FEPU vote advanced, and sometimes very substantially, over the PCP vote of April. What the results therefore show is a volatile situation: they do not show any stable electoral base for the PS, such as that enjoyed by other Western European social-democratic parties.

The Struggle for Intersindical

But perhaps an even clearer indication of the shallow roots of the PS than the election figures has been its inability to construct a reformist trade union current. In pretty well every country where a strong social-democratic party exists, there is either a split in the labour movement between rival trade union centres more or less aligned to the socialist or the communist party (France, Spain), or the trade unions as a whole are under social-democratic hegemony, and provide a fundamental bulwark to the social-democratic party (Britain, Norway, Federal Germany). In Portugal, however, neither of these scenarios have developed. Portugal's trade union centre, the Intersindical,[16] has remained both united, and under revolutionary leadership—despite the fact that since the dispute over the trade union legislation of early 1975 (which institutionalised the Intersindical as Portugal's only legal trade union centre),[17] the PS leadership has been consciously attempting to build a trade union base for itself—either by taking over large sections of Intersindical, or by splitting the movement and creating a second centre. At first it looked as if this PS offensive was producing results when a number of white-collar unions elected anti-Intersindical leaderships in mid-1975. (Although among manual strata the challenge to Intersindical made almost no headway at all.)

In April 1976, the real battle for the trade unions began when 16 anti-Intersindical leaderships (mainly white-collar) came together to sign an "Open Letter" to the Intersindical Secretariat. This letter (from which the group derived its name, the "Carta Aberta") claimed that the Intersindical Congress of the previous year had been unrepresentative, that there should be a "Congress for Unity", involving all Portugal's unions, whether affiliated to Intersindical or not, and that the Congress Organising Committee should "represent the various currents of opinion with effective expression in the Portuguese trade union movement".[18]

[14] These figures are for mainland Portugal, and do not include Madeira and the Azores.

[15] FEPU—People United Electoral Front—consisted of the PCP, the MDP (Portuguese Democratic Movement) and the FSP (Popular Socialist Front—Manuel Serra's organisation), plus large numbers of independents and PS dissidents.

[16] Its full name, as decided by the January 1977 Congress, is CGTP (General Confederation of Portuguese Workers)/Intersindical Nacional.

[17] In retrospect the imposition of one trade union centre by legal means ("unicidade") was a serious mistake, for which the MFA and the PCP must share the blame. Although it was an extremely popular measure (hundreds of thousands of workers demonstrated in the streets in favour of "unicidade"), it allowed political space for Mario Soares' demagogy, attacking the PCP and Intersindical for state intervention in the unions. The PCP has implicitly admitted its mistake by quietly letting the issue drop when, amidst considerable media publicity, the Soares government repealed the law of "unicidade".

[18] The Open Letter and other important documents on the unions can be found in *Tudo sobre Intersindical e Carta Aberta* (Cadernos Aqui, Lisbon, 1977).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The idea for a new Congress had been first mooted at a meeting of PS trade unionists in January 1976: the PS aim was to undermine the strength of the PCP within Intersindical, and fashion trade unions in its own image.

But much to the surprise and consternation of the PS right, the Intersindical Secretariat accepted the need for a new Congress, and accepted most of the Carta Aberta demands. The Carta Aberta response was to introduce new demands. A deliberate break with the Intersindical Secretariat was engineered over the composition of the Organising Committee. The Carta Aberta demanded parity on the Organising Committee between its own subscribers and supporters of the Intersindical Secretariat. But at its height the Carta Aberta could only claim to represent at most 350,000 workers—or 15 per cent of all union members. Institutional parity was thus a bureaucratic method of winning a position grossly in excess of that merited by its support. The Intersindical Secretariat insisted that the Organising Committee should be elected at a General Meeting of all Unions: this meeting, although boycotted by Carta Aberta unions, elected a committee on which places were reserved for Carta supporters. Most of them did not take up these places however: instead the Carta Aberta went all out to discredit and wreck the Congress. Out of this fracas the Carta Aberta evidently hoped to convert itself into a new trade union centre.

But instead what followed was the collapse of the PS/Carta Aberta offensive, as union members rose in revolt against the splitters. In union after union fresh elections replaced Carta Aberta leaderships with pro-Intersindical ones, or General Assemblies of workers voted their union's withdrawal from the Carta Aberta and its participation in the Congress.

Failure of the "Carta Aberta"

Throughout 1977 union elections were won by pro-Intersindical, united left lists, while the enfeebled Carta Aberta grew ever weaker. Former PS strongholds, such as the Lisbon Commercial Workers' Union, fell to the left; and in December 1977 the only remaining manual unions in the Carta Aberta, the Aveiro Metalworkers and the Northern Mineworkers, both elected united left lists. In all, out of 110 union elections held in 1977, 86 were won by united left lists. Unions representing 1,700,000 workers are currently affiliated to Intersindical, while 80 unions representing a further 300,000 participate regularly in Intersindical structures while not being affiliates (often because these very small unions cannot afford the affiliation fee). These two categories account for about 95 per cent of Portugal's trade unionists.

But even within the Carta Aberta itself the PS has been unable to consolidate a social-democratic stronghold: in certain of the major white-collar unions the shift has been to the right. Both the Northern and Southern Bankworkers' Unions, two of the major components of the Carta Aberta, elected PPD leaderships. By the end of 1977, the Carta Aberta was more under the dominance of the PPD than the PS.

Thus by early 1978, the Socialist Party found itself without any meaningful trade union backing at all. This was despite the clear support from the Soares government to the Carta Aberta.

Is Stable Bourgeois Democracy Possible in Portugal?

Closely linked with one's estimation of the Socialist Party is the question of whether bourgeois democracy has any future in Portugal. The weight of the non-capitalist sector in the economy leads the PCP to reply in the negative. At the PCP Congress in November 1976 Cunhal could state that: "The transformations achieved profoundly alter our social and economic structures. Capitalist relations of production are still dominant, but they are not determinant." According to Cunhal, various "laws" of capitalism—such as the law of surplus value and the law of capitalist accumulation—had ceased to have universal applicability in Portugal: "If we consider merely the objective economic situation, and not the class nature of political power, the Portuguese economy as a whole is in an intermediate and transitional stage between a capitalist economy and a socialist one. Still much closer to the first, but moving towards the second."[19]

Two alternatives were posed by this situation, alternatives implicit in Cunhal's distinction between "the objective economic situation" and "the class nature of political power": there could either be a "non-capitalist dynamic" in which the state intervened to stimulate economic development, resting on the great gains of the Revolution, the Agrarian Reform, the nationalisations and the workers' control, while not excluding (but exerting overall control over) a still substantial private sector. Alternatively the bourgeois class nature of political power could impose its will: a "capitalist dynamic" was possible, resting on private control of the means of production, intensified exploitation of labour and renewed capitalist accumulation. This dynamic, labelled by the PCP as "capitalist, landowner and imperialist restoration" implied a full-scale attack on the non-capitalist

[19] Cunhal, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-277.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sector of the economy, leading to a worsening in the country's economic situation and obliging the ruling class to resort to "repressive measures and the effective liquidation of democracy".

This has been a continual refrain in PCP literature and speeches: either Portugal advances towards socialism, or it regresses to a highly authoritarian form of state structure.[20] There can be no middle road: stable bourgeois democracy is neither desirable nor possible in Portugal. This view has been attacked as schematic. Perhaps the most coherent alternative position has been advocated by Poulantzas. He argued—quite correctly—that what was lost on November 25 was not an immediate advance to socialism, but the hegemony of the popular masses over the process of democratisation. He then drew the conclusion that November 25 had restored bourgeois hegemony over the democratisation process, but that that process itself was not really threatened. The situation was stabilised and was more or less analagous to post-colonels Greece. To quote Poulantzas' final sentence on Portugal, the democratisation process had been "incontestably stabilised in favour of the bourgeoisie".[21]

Unfortunately, the Portuguese bourgeoisie had lost whatever tepid interest it had once held in democracy. Terrified by the events of 1975, its strategy has been to roll back the democratisation process. Poulantzas' optimism of June 1976, when he could write that none of the gains of the Revolution "were basically challenged after November 25", was badly misplaced. From the assumption of office by Mario Soares' government onwards, a grim and bitter struggle around these gains has dominated Portuguese politics, with a creeping intensification of repression as farms have been returned to latifundists, factories returned to saboteurs, and the nationalised sector has come under repeated threat.

The fact that there has been no dramatic collapse, no coup, no bloodbath, is not evidence of stability—it is rather a testimony to the continued strength of the Portuguese left and labour movement, which has managed to slow down the reactionary offensive, and to preserve in essentials, so far at least, both the nationalised sector and the Agrarian Reform. And as the situation has deteriorated, as the PS has made concession after concession to the right, so the latter's demands have escalated. Denationalisation, complete destruction of the Agrarian Reform, revision of the Constitution before the legally stipulated date—all these questions have been raised. Sections of the bourgeoisie show signs of drifting towards outright fascist organisations and the extreme right mobilised significant street demonstrations in Oporto and Lisbon in autumn 1977.

No Bourgeois Normalisation

The fundamental question in Portugal today is not that of a "democratisation process" in the abstract. For democracy in Portugal is rooted in the profound transformation wrought in her economic structure. Democracy stands or falls with those transformations. The struggle may now be entering its most bitter phase with the entry of the far right into government in the coalition between the PS and the CDS.

The events of 1977, and the likely scenario for 1978, do not look like bourgeois normalisation: they seem far better to accord with the PCP's analysis of a struggle between a capitalist dynamic (with an internal logic leading to repressive modes of rule) and a non-capitalist dynamic leading to socialism. The outcome of this struggle will to a large extent depend on the PCP itself, as the major force within the working class.

This article does not pretend to lay down a definitive line on the Portuguese Revolution: it seeks to stimulate thought and discussion. This was the only revolution in post-war Western Europe. Study of its lessons might lead us to question many old schemas, and also much of the newer orthodoxy of Eurocommunism.

[20] The key phrase in PCP thinking is "Democracia rumo ao Socialismo"—democracy *moving in the direction of* socialism.

[21] Poulantzas, *The Crisis of the Dictatorships*, pp. 134-155.

MARXISM TODAY
SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please post "Marxism Today" to me every month.
I enclose: £4.50 for one year UK and Eire
£5.25 for one year Abroad
(*Delete the line which does not apply*)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Post with remittance to:
CENTRAL BOOKS LTD.
37 Grays Inn Road, London, WC1X 8PS

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Political Strategy and Community Action

Alan Booth

(*The author is active in community politics in Harlow.*)

London Court Attacks Picketing . . . . Portsmouth Tenants Win Battle Over Condensation . . . . Hunslet Tenants Fight Heating Costs . . . . Hirwaun Pickets Force Gas Tanks To New Site . . . . Liverpool Tenants Occupy Church And Turn It Into People's Centre . . . . Burnley Residents Fight Housing Allocation Policy . . . . Action Group Fail To Stop Motorway . . . . Council Say No To More Facilities For The Under-Fives . . . . Tenants Fight Plans For Bingo Hall . . . .

This is the picture, full of contradictions and contrasts, successes and set-backs. It is in a phrase, "community action".

Community action struggles have a long history—with campaigns like the Clydeside rent strike of 1915, the rent strikes of the late 1930s against private landlords and councils, the squatters' movement just after the war and the activities against rent rises in the 1950s. However, the major activity in this area developed from the mid-1960s onwards. The past decade has seen a massive increase in both the range of campaigns and the numbers taking part.

Surprisingly little has been written on the relationship of the various campaigns to the broader question of political strategy. Many of the articles and pamphlets published about such activities have been descriptive and anecdotal, rather than analytical. It is, therefore, to be welcomed that three books have recently been published which attempt to fill this gap. The books[1] are quite different in their content: Jan O'Malley's *The Politics of Community Action* is a detailed account of housing campaigns in the Notting Hill area of London between 1966 and 1974; in the final chapter "Lessons for the Future" an attempt is made to assess the overall political significance of this activity. *Community or Class Struggle?* is a collection of essays which attempt, from a broad marxist perspective, to examine the politics and practice of community organising. Cynthia Cockburn's *The Local State: Management of Cities and People* looks in detail at the relationship between two new trends in local government: corporate management and community development. Her analysis concentrates on the experience of one London borough—Lambeth.

This article is not so much a "review" of these books, but an attempt to discuss some of the broader questions which they raise in relation to the Communist Party's strategy for achieving socialism—*The British Road to Socialism*. I should say at the outset that the comments which follow are based, to some extent, on my own experience of community struggles. Probably like many others active in this field I have tended to be pre-occupied with tactical rather than strategic questions. This article is no more than an attempt to begin to overcome this deficiency and hopefully it will encourage others active in this area of struggle to do the same.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNITY STRUGGLE

One of the main characteristics of community action struggles is that they tend to be highly localised and often develop spontaneously over a single issue. A survey of the struggles of the past five years in the pages of *Community Action* (a bi-monthly magazine which draws together experiences of local activities) reveals a wide range of issues over which campaigns have developed—rents, housing repairs, heating costs, play facilities, motorways, pollution, city centre re-development, social service cuts, advice centres, etc. The range of campaigns involves people from a great number of groups and interests with considerably different levels of political understanding and involvement.

The key question is how do the various campaigns link together? Their overwhelming feature is that they take place in the field of capitalist reproduction. As Cynthia Cockburn comments:

> "We have to recognise that alongside struggle at the point of production, in the mines and factories, there is struggle at the point of reproduction, in the schools, on housing estates, in the street, in the home." (p. 163)

The concept of "reproduction" is central to Cockburn's analysis of the relationship between local

[1] *The Politics of Community Action* by Jan O'Malley: published by Spokesman Books. £2.50. *Community or Class Struggle?* by John Cowley, Adah Kaye, Marjorie Mayo, Mike Thompson: published by Stage 1, £2.95. *The Local State: Management of Cities and People* by Cynthia Cockburn: published by Pluto Press, £2.95.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

councils and the State; and provides the link between the essays in *Community or Class Struggle?* It is a concept which provides a useful starting point for a consideration of strategic questions concerning this area of struggle.

Reproduction

Capitalist production requires that the elements of the productive process should be reproduced (raw materials, machinery etc.) But in addition the relations of production have to be reproduced, particularly the relationship between capital and labour. Thus capitalism must reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produces. The reproduction of the relations of production are secured through the machinery of the state. The way in which the state functions in Britain is clearly significant for the type of strategy which is adopted in challenging its power. The task of reproducing capitalist relations is done partly through actual repression and coercion. But much more typically in Britain it is achieved not by repression but by ideology, by inculcating a certain view of the world. In fact one of the major strengths of the capitalist system in Britain lies in the fact that the majority of people accept it and have a view of the world that belongs to the ruling class in one way or another. For many people this acceptance is largely generated by their everyday experience at work, in the community and at home. The complex web of institutions both nationally and locally often provide a framework in which problems are both discussed and tackled. As such they can limit the level at which the class struggle is conducted, in other words for many families problems of housing, rents etc., are essentially individual problems and not related to more general inequalities in power and wealth in society.

How do local councils fit into this framework? Clearly they cannot be reduced to agents of repression, although from time to time they do forcibly evict families from their homes and repress certain sections of the community. Their function is located much more in the area of the reproduction of capitalist relations, often reinforcing a restrictive view of social relations and class struggle. The community struggles of the past decade have helped to challenge this function and as such mark an important development in class struggle in an area which some consider secondary to the "key struggle" at the point of production.

It is interesting to note that Marx himself recognised the need to develop ways of developing class struggle. In a speech to the General Council of the International Working Men's Association in 1865 he advised workers that in their day-to-day struggles in the factories they should not forget they were dealing with the effects, not the causes of these effects, and that they should extend the struggle beyond the factory and make demands other than purely economistic demands for better wages.

In another comment in the Grundrisse Marx wrote:

> "The important point to be emphasised here is that whether production and consumption are considered as activities of one or separate individuals, they appear as aspects of one process in which production forms the starting point and therefore the predominating factor . . . consumption appears as a factor of production . . . the demands of consumption also influence production. A mutual interaction takes place between the various elements."

Production and Consumption

Under capitalism today there is an increasing tendency for the physical distance between production and consumption to widen. Work and home, production and consumption appear as two separate areas of social experience. The appearance of their separation is one of the major strengths and supports of the capitalist system. The fact is that they are indissolubly linked.

This question is the subject of an interesting analysis by Manuel Castells. In commenting on the growth of community-based struggles he remarks:

> "They constitute a structured social process whose logic and unity is derived from the progressive development of new social contradictions in capitalist industrialised societies . . . the accelerated concentrations of the means of production, the establishment of economic and financial monopolies, of large-scale productive enterprises, and of production management and the ever-growing interpenetration of all these by the state apparatus . . . *these constitute the development of state monopoly capitalism*".[2]

The rapid development of state monopoly capitalism in the 1960s and the growing involvement of the state in local areas mark an important source of contradiction in capitalist relations. In Castell's view the growth of conurbations, the re-development of city centres, the building of motorways and the extension of social services are essential components of the development of state monopoly capitalism. But, as he points out, our society results not only from the logical development of the system but also from the struggle between classes. The complex web of welfare and social services which are provided at a local level are the result of long periods of struggle—a struggle in which the labour movement has played a crucial role. However, the provision of such facilities produce a fundamental contradiction within the system—while the need for more facilities increases with the development of capitalism (both

[2] *Community or Class Struggle?* p. 42.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for economic reasons and reasons of class struggle) in general, they are a non-profitable sector of capitalist investment. Thus in periods of recession they are subject to reduction and cuts. Their vulnerability is demonstrated by the recent cuts in public spending, which have fallen particularly heavily on areas such as education, housing and social welfare. It is important to examine this process in more detail as it provides the structure within which political struggle is being conducted today.

Why in the 1960s?

In the 1960s protest movements and local struggles developed on a scale not seen since the 1930s. A key question is why did they develop in the 1960s? An answer to this question would require an extensive article, all we can do here is to touch on some of the main areas. In the early 1960s, it became obvious to various sections of the state that industry would have to find ways of increasing investment and productivity if it was to survive on the basis of private profitability. The election of the Labour Government in 1964 saw the concerted attempt to both re-structure British industry and increase the productivity of individual workers: As Harold Wilson put it at the Labour Party Conference in 1963:

> "In all our plans for the future, we are redefining and we are re-stating our socialism in terms of the scientific revolution. But that revolution cannot become a reality unless we are prepared to make far-reaching changes in economic and social attitudes which permeate our whole system of society. . . . The Britain that is going to be forged in the white heat of this revolution will be no place for restrictive practices or out-dated methods on either side of industry."

Once in power the Labour Government carried out policies aimed at achieving these objectives in a wide range of areas: in housing, in industrial relations, in redundancy and re-training, investment and extending social services. Their impact on individual workers and local areas was far-reaching. The attempts to re-structure British industry were uneven in their impact. In the more prosperous areas new jobs were created, albeit of a routine and low-skilled nature. But in the older industrial areas it sharply reduced the labour force. Between 1966 and 1971 manufacturing employment in Manchester declined by 20 per cent, in Liverpool by 19 per cent, in inner London by 18 per cent and in Canning Town in London's East End almost half the area's workers were made redundant.

Within factories this period saw a drive towards increasing the productivity of individual workers. This was achieved partly through the introduction of new machinery and partly through the development of productivity deals in wage-bargaining. In 1966 productivity deals covered less than half a million workers, by 1969 three and three-quarter million workers had negotiated such deals. One unintended consequence of this development was the growth in the effectiveness of shop floor organisation, as many deals were negotiated at a factory level.

Local Changes

As industrial re-structuring progressed in the 1960s many working class communities were affected by local changes. Councils began to respond to working class pressure to provide better housing. By 1967 councils were building over 200,000 homes a year, and in the private sector over 200,000 homes were completed in every year from 1964 to 1968. The ambitions outlined in the White Paper: *The Housing Programme 1965-70* of half a million homes a year were in sight of being realised. The aim of many local councils, particularly Labour councils, was to build the largest number of homes in the shortest possible time. Thus between 1964 and 1972 well over half of homes completed were flats—often in high-rise blocks. Building techniques also changed, whereas in 1964 industrial building provided 21 per cent of council housing, by 1968 it had risen to 42 per cent.

This was also the period of the development of city centres, with new shopping precincts and office blocks. Such development needed money and those individuals and institutions concerned with finance capital quickly responded and were able to make huge profits from the interest on the money they lent. It was the period of the property boom.

But the consequences of such development proved disastrous. The time-lag between demolition and re-housing was often as much as five years or more. Whole areas were blighted and families had to live in increasing urban decay. Those who were able to move to the new estates were often not much better. As one commentator has put it "the white heat of the technological revolution was heat which in a concrete walled flat tended to congeal into grey dampness of fungus blacked walls."[3] Many of the estates had no social amenities and very quickly conflict developed between the tenants and the local council.

Centralisation

The 1960s was also a period in which the state began to take a direct interest in the way in which local councils functioned. There were numerous reports on how the various services of central and

[3] Quoted in *Whatever Happened to Council Housing*, National Community Development Project.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

local government could be improved and re-organised to meet new pressure. In 1968 the Royal Commission on Local Government (Redcliffe-Maud Report) proposed a complete re-structuring of councils. Implemented in 1974 it meant that seven metropolitan counties, including the Greater London Council, were responsible for a population of 18.8 million people (38 per cent of the country's total population). Changes were also recommended in the Seebohm Report on social services (1968); Town Planning Act (1968); Area Health Authorities (1974); and water authorities (1973). There is little doubt that such developments were closely linked to the need to make local government more responsive to the needs of monopoly capital: although whether this objective has been achieved is another matter.

The moves towards centralisation and the growth in the provision of services brought about an increase in public spending. An increasing amount of this in the 1960s and 70s was provided by the government through the Rate Support Grant (this is the money provided by central government to help finance the running of local government services). At the same time a variety of reports called for rationalisation and co-ordination of local services. Pressure was put on councils by the government to introduce corporate management.

In discussing this process in the late 1960s a Community Development Project Study comments:

> "The state came to adopt an increasingly assertive role in the management of the economy as a whole in the interests of restoring private profitability, as well as intervening to encourage particular industries and companies to re-structure and introducing legislation to make their task easier. There was also the massive growth of planning and the introduction of new, more sophisticated management techniques —while local and central public expenditure became part of an integrated state function manipulated from the centre. Overall it was clear that the state was now much more concerned with making sure that economic changes would succeed and they could be carried through effectively without causing too much resentment among the working class."[4]

The growth of community-based struggles arose from the basic contradictions within this process. As trade unionists began to resist attempts at work to restrict their functioning (*In Place of Strife* and Industrial Relations Act), in the local areas people began to develop collective efforts to have some say in how their areas were to be run. For councils it meant that they had to come to terms with a wide range of protest groups. The procedures which councils adopted to cope with this pressure varied from area to area: in some boroughs and towns attempts were made to incorporate the protesters *into the institutional structure of the council*, whereas in others they were just ignored. Whatever tactic was used it became clear that pressures were on councils from a number of different directions, an important new area of class struggle had begun to develop. It is therefore important that the Left generally and the Communist Party in particular makes some assessment of this development especially as it effects the role of local struggle in the fight for socialism. In the rest of this article we will examine the position of local councils in relation to the state and discuss the problems and possibilities of community-based struggle.

II. LOCAL COUNCILS AND THE STATE

In opening the chapter on Local Government as Local State, Cynthia Cockburn argues:

> "We need a view of local government that explains the working connections between central government and local government, local councils and other state authorities at local level, connections between the world of government and the world of business. We need an analysis that sets local government in the context of the real economic situation of the period in which we live and asks: what is its job?" (p. 41)

Cynthia Cockburn then attempts to answer this question by looking at the London Borough of Lambeth. She examines the relationship between the dominant social forces and their presence in Lambeth. In Lambeth the dominant classes are in the main invisible. The class forces which work powerfully in the borough are the shareholders, and directors of commercial firms in the City, the property dealers and speculators and international bankers—few live in Lambeth, but they are the dominant class nonetheless. In her view, for these sections of society, local councils are scarcely noticed. She then argues that:

> "When I refer to Lambeth as 'local state' it is to say neither that it is something distinct from the national state nor that it alone represents the state locally. It is to indicate that it is part of the whole." (p. 47)

It would appear, then, that councils form part of the state. The key question is, how do the councils as elected bodies fit into this structure? She comments:

> "Nominally in control of the permanent structure of the state is a changeable component: the elected bodies. They comprise both Parliament and the many elected councils . . . one of the contradictions of capitalism is the necessity of maintaining a class

[4] *Gilding the Ghetto*, pp. 41-42 Community Development Project.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> system while at the same time weaning the working class away from class identification that could lead to class militancy. Electoral democracy with its set of political parties, helps in this situation in that it appears, to those who insist on thinking in class terms, to enable adequate representation of the working class. Yet it also contrives to appear classless in a classless society." (p. 48)

Returning to Cynthia Cockburn's central question, what is the job of local government? Her analysis can only lead one to the conclusion that councils are simply expressions, at local level, of the state. This is not only a fatalistic and ahistorical view, but clearly has important implications for the nature of struggle itself. Councils, in her view, have little part to play in the struggle for socialism. In Lambeth she found that ". . . even socialist councillors are quickly curbed by the decision-making power of senior permanent officials." (p. 50.) No doubt this was the experience in Lambeth, it is also the experience in many other areas. Furthermore, it would probably be true to say that on most councils, particularly in metropolitan areas, business is dominated by senior, full-time officers and committee chairmen with ordinary council members playing little part in formulating important council policies. However, there is an important difference in describing a situation, as it appears now, and analysing how and why it arose. The latter requires going beyond the mechanistic structural framework which informs Cynthia Cockburn's analysis.

The Potential of Councils

Local government is much more complex than Cynthia Cockburn suggests. On the one hand, councils can simply carry out policies handed down by government and the civil servants; on the other hand, councils are in a potentially strong position to act as mobilisers of opinion in their area. The extent to which the latter is achieved is dependent not only on the nature of local councillors, but also on the level of mass struggle in the community. After all it was mass struggle throughout Britain which led to the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act and important changes in the Housing Finance Act. A central problem is that many councillors, even those on the Left, do not appreciate the link between their role as councillors and the need to mobilise support in the community. In many cases councils take on the form of mystification—an image which is reinforced by the "disappearance" of many councillors once the elections are over. Community action struggles can play an important part in the de-mystification of councils and thereby help to create new levels of class struggle.

In addition the expansion of state provision, particularly at local level, has brought with it certain contradictions. Within councils there are a range of opinions among the full-time staff as well as among the councillors; this is particularly the case at the "professional" level. There is a growing gap between the level of resources which social workers, teachers, community workers and others need in order to do a satisfactory job and the extent to which funds are provided by the state. This contradiction manifests itself in trade union activity, which often transcends the question of wages, and the increase in these workers' involvement in the communities which they service. Therefore, it is incorrect to present local government as a monolithic structure willingly carrying out the directives of the state.

The process, which has emerged from the contradictions of the services which councils are expected to perform, raises questions concerning their relationship with central government. In the past six years the financial control by government over councils has increased. Roughly two-thirds of a council's spending on day-to-day services and salaries is met by the government through the Rate Support Grant. The recent use of "cash limits" has further strengthened central government control. The cumulative impact of public expenditure cuts has placed many local services in jeopardy. Thus further conflicts develop between councils and the government. Many councils will respond to the current situation by cutting services thus provoking a reaction from the recipients of these services; the extent to which this reaction moves beyond the individual will be determined by a complex web of factors.

The political potential of the current situation should not be underestimated. The contradictions outlined above provide a source by which a whole number of aspects of local government can be de-mystified. In the process they pose new levels of class struggle. Essential to this is seeing councils as more than bodies elected every few years and staffed by a battery of permanent officials. It requires us to examine the way in which community struggles can provide an experience for its participants which transcend the locality in which they take place. Such a development cannot happen spontaneously; it requires political leadership and an understanding of the nature of struggles which are developing in the local areas.

III. PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVITIES

Jan O'Malley in *The Politics of Community Action* outlines in detail the housing struggle in Notting Hill between 1966 and 1974. Behind the account of the day-to-day struggles is an attempt to explore the reasons for the successes and failures, advances and set-backs. Jan O'Malley comments, that the advances which were made in the course of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

campaigns should not be underestimated; but despite ten years of struggle Notting Hill and its people are still under the domination of a right-wing council—Kensington. The campaigns failed to make a lasting political impact. This failure is explained around three factors.

Firstly, community struggles can only apply limited sanctions, there is no "strike" weapon. Secondly, there was a lack of structure in community organising, this led to a "tyranny of structurelessness". When informed elites are combined with the myth of structurelessness there can be no attempt to put limits on the use of power. It becomes capricious. Thirdly, there was no coherent and permanent national network of groups involved in this type of struggle.

Jan O'Malley's analysis of the problems of the Notting Hill campaigns have a significance which extend outside that particular area. They raise fundamental questions concerning the ways in which local campaigns "fit into" the broader class struggle in society. Can, for example, campaigns on play-space, care for the under-fives be considered as part of the class struggle? There are those who argue that these issues are not class issues, but sectional concerns. I would argue that this approach completely overlooks the way in which the ruling class rules in a society like Britain. Many of those taking part in local campaigns probably do not see the issues as class issues, and as long as this persists the political possibilities will be limited. The involvement of Communists in such campaigns can provide an important link between the immediate concern and other struggles which are going on in society. The ability to take struggles to new qualitative levels is not dependent on the volume of Wesleyan style rhetoric but on such factors as how the campaign is organised, links with the labour movement, as well as the general balance of class forces in the society itself. Such work requires Communist Party members to examine very closely how they involve themselves in local work.

Collective action

Most activists reflect, after a particular campaign, the factors which contributed to its success or failure. In our experience it is difficult to locate with any degree of certainty why some campaigns "take-off" whereas others do not. Clearly a major factor in drawing people into a campaign is not simply that the issue affects them, but that they feel that they can do something about it in a collective way. Many of those drawn into community struggles have never been members of political parties, never attended trade union meetings, or worked in factories where there is a strong trade union organisation. Therefore, the significance of collective action may not be seen immediately by a great number of people. This "isolation" is reinforced by the structures within which many local services are provided. Such provision is essentially at the level of the individual or family. In many work-places disputes between individual workers and management are often resolved with representation from the trade union, whereas on most housing estates complaints over maintenance or lack of repairs or disputes over rent, collective representation on behalf of a tenant would not only not be allowed, but would not even be considered by the majority of tenants. Each dispute, each grievance is perceived as an individual problem. Therefore, it is not surprising that many people are, initially, reluctant to believe that collective action can help them resolve a problem. This sense of isolation acts as a powerful ideological barrier to participating with others. It should not be underestimated the degree to which ruling class ideology and state structures have imposed a feeling of helplessness and resignation on the part of many families.

However, as the experiences of community struggles illustrate, people are not simply conditioned by the society in which they live, they can also actively intervene in the processes which determine the structures in that society. Local struggles may not in themselves be a challenge to the ruling class but as part of a wider struggle they play a crucial part in developing a challenge to ruling class ideology. After all, it is in the community where people live out their day-to-day lives and experience the impact of national decisions. And it is here that long-term changes in political consciousness take place.

An Integral Part

The significance of this area of struggle is acknowledged in *The British Road to Socialism* with the concept of the broad democratic alliance. The task is to translate this from a concept to a political reality. The problems which Jan O'Malley remarks on above can only be resolved by drawing together struggles in a political way. This involves the sort of political leadership which only a revolutionary party can provide. But it also means that that party must sink its roots in the community, acting, not as a collection of political marines arriving as a shock-force when an "issue" blows up, but as an integral part of the community living out its day-to-day problems. The strategic importance of such work arises from the contradictions which have emerged with the development of state monopoly capitalism. Intervention in this area of struggle is a recognition of the political realities of Britain today, in the 1970s—it is not a secondary area of political work, it is an integral part of the class struggle which under the conditions of capitalism provides a key element in the struggle for political power.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM PROGRESS PUBLISHERS

HISTORY OF THE USSR

A 3-volume history of the peoples inhabitating the Soviet Union prepared by prominent members of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Vol. I. FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

A detailed treatment of the history of Russia up to the October Revolution of 1917, tracing the development of the Russian state from primitive days through to the expansion of the Russian Empire up to the crisis on the eve of the World War 1.

7147 1023 7 Hbk 338 pages £3.00

Vol. II. FROM THE OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION TO THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

This volume covers the stirring events of the revolution in 1917, the civil war and the infant Soviet Republic's fight against foreign intervention. Chapters on the fundamental social, economic and cultural changes in the life of Soviet people under the impact of the New Economic Policy and rapid industrialisation.

7147 1051 2 Hbk 325 pages £3.00

Vol. III. FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR TO THE PRESENT DAY

After a section on the war against fascism, this volume tells the story of the Soviet Union's development in the changed world after 1945. Concludes with a chapter on the development of Socialist culture.

7147 1085 7 Hbk 314 pages £3.00

Each volume has a detailed chronology of the period covered and an index.

Available from:

CENTRAL BOOKS LTD.
37 Grays Inn Road
London WC1X 8PS

SCIENCE & SOCIETY

VOLUME XLI, NUMBER 4, WINTER, 1977-78

WOMEN, LABOR AND FAMILY LIFE: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE
Joan B. Landes

CHANGES IN THE MODE OF PRODUCTION AND THE GROWTH OF "MASS MILITANCY" IN THE BRITISH MINING INDUSTRY, 1954-1974
Ian Rutledge

CAPITAL AND THE PRODUCTION OF NEEDS
Michael A. Lebowitz

JURGEN HABERMAS'S CRITIQUE OF MARXISM
Tony Flood

NICOLAUS AND MARX'S METHOD OF SCIENTIFIC THEORY IN THE *GRUNDRISSE*
Erwin Marquit

A FURTHER COMMENT ON KARL POPPER AND MARXIAN LAWS
Donald McQuarie

BOOK REVIEWS BOOK NOTES

Subscription: $10.00 Foreign Subscription: $12.00
Institution: $15.00 Foreign Institution: $17.00

SCIENCE & SOCIETY
445 West 59th St., N.Y.C., N.Y. 10019

CRITICA MARXISTA

SOMMARIO del N.6. 1977

Aldo Tortorella: Gli intellettuali nella crisi della societa italiana.

Biagio de Giovanni: Intellettuali e potere.

Silvino Grussu: Modificazioni delle funzioni intellettuali dal 1936 a oggi. Una analisi quantitativa.

Gabriele Giannantoni; Politica e cultura negli anni settanta.

Giovanni Battista Zorzoli: La crisi e la intellettualita scientifica.

Gianni Baget-Bozzo: Un intervento sulla questione democristiani: la fine di una cultura politica.

Biaglio Salvermini: La crisi fiscale dello Stato.

Subscriptions: **L.10,000 per annum (Italy)**
L.20,000 „ „ abroad ($25)

from

CRITICA MARXISTA
Via Botteghe Oscure 4, 00186 Roma

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Role of Shop Stewards

Interview with Danny Connor and Bernie Passingham

(Below are reprinted extracts of an interview[1] with Danny Connor, Convenor of the Metal Stamping and Body Plant, Dagenham, and Bernie Passingham, Convenor of the River Plant, Dagenham, and secretary of the Ford Convenors' National Committee.)

The Development of Shop Steward Organisation

B.P. Relations between the Ford Motor Company and the unions didn't come about just by the company saying "we'd like the trade unions to come in". It's been a long, hard slog of a battle. The company has got plants all over the world with the main base at Detroit. That is the centre, that is where the main decisions arrive from. In the early 30s, they developed the Dagenham Estate, which is still the biggest Ford plant in the UK. Within Dagenham you had the Ford Motor Company, you had Briggs' Bodies which made car bodies, and you had Kelsey Hayes which made the wheels for the cars. These were three distinct, separate companies at that point of time. At Briggs' Bodies, which had far more shopfloor activity by the stewards' movement, you had recognition of the toolmakers by 1941. It wasn't until 1944 that the Ford Motor Company recognised the trade unions. This was done at the level of the TUC; they wouldn't negotiate locally with shop stewards or trade union officials, they would only go to the supreme body, and that was the TUC.

Then we move to the period when the Ford Motor Company bought out Kelsey Hayes' Wheels, and in 1952 they acquired the shares and bought out Briggs' Bodies. That time was very interesting because Fords negotiated with the unions at national level (and when they meant national level, it was general secretaries and national officials), whereas within the Briggs' side, where I was a steward, this was done by local officials connected with the Confed. (Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions).

When Ford bought Briggs' Bodies out they decided that, for some reason best known to themselves, they would also give notice and terminate the agreement. Which they did. And hence we had a situation where we had no agreement, but the company put forward a set of proposals, which we called "standardisation", which basically would have given the workers more money—some of the workers—but it meant the company would have taken away the rights which had been won over the years, the right to have meetings within the plant premises, the question of washing-up time, preparation time—all these things were rights to be taken away for a bit more money and standardisation. Now the Briggs' workers felt that they would stick to their principles, and as a matter of fact it took over five years before the unions signed the agreement Fords wanted. And therefore you could say that in 1958 Briggs came under the broad structure of Fords in one agreement. Consequently, all negotiations of pay and conditions were done at national level, and stewards and local officials couldn't talk rates or pay or anything of that nature. They could only negotiate on disputes and things which come in their province at local level.

In the fifties and sixties the stewards' movement struggled to survive at all. In 1957 you had the dismissal of Johnny McLoughlin, the "bellringer". In 1963 the management effectively achieved a break-up of the stewards' committee with the dismissal of 17 stewards.

Moving on, then, you come to an important phase within this history of Fords, when we had at last got a fairly strong and active shop stewards' movement, and, on the other hand, you had the official trade unions and their situation. And it seemed to be that there were two opposing forces. The stewards had no rights at that point in time; the officials would go in, they would negotiate and agree to whatever it was, a wage increase or sometimes to do away with our tea-break and give us a penny in exchange, and you would get a notice on the board. Obviously we reacted and we had to fight a constant internal battle within our unions, as well as with the company, to try and get this altered.

The big change really came about in 1969 when the unions on the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee (FNJNC) and the company had come to an agreement on penalty clauses to restrict the shopfloor movement. We had all opposed that agreement, some of the major unions opposed it, but nevertheless they still went ahead. We came out on strike, they still met, and still endorsed the

[1] The full text is contained in a pamphlet, *Ford: Shop Stewards on Industrial Democracy*, published by the Institute for Workers' Control, Gamble Street, Nottingham NG7 4ET. The interview was conducted by Jon Clarke and Roy Lewis.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

agreement. The company took the unions to court, they lost it, and from that point of time, 1969, we had a real fundamental change in relation to negotiating machinery and recognition of the shop-floor. For up to that time, a company member at that level wouldn't be seen talking to a shop steward, he would only be seen talking to an official. After the 1969 court case, the fundamental change in industrial relations was that at last they realised that the set-up had to change, that no longer could they talk to a bunch of officials and come to an agreement at some office in London and expect it to apply on the shop-floor, but that the shop-floor had to be taken note of.

The Collective Bargaining Structure at Fords

B.P. Therefore, we then changed the NJNC by introducing lay members for the first time. We agreed that there should be seven representing the TGWU, because we had the largest membership and previously we had been out-voted by some of the unions with far fewer members. The AEU also agreed, and they had five seats, although they didn't take all the seats up as lay members. That basically is the set-up we have today. It's improved greatly because we have a convenors' committee which is also very important. We have 23 Ford plants in the United Kingdom, of various sizes and producing various parts. If one looks at British Leyland and their arguments on differentials and the "Coventry rate", and the outlying plants trying to get up to that rate, we had the opposite in Fords.

When they built the Halewood plant, it was we in Dagenham who stopped work to make sure that the Halewood plant received the same rates of pay as we got. We felt that as people contributing to make a car, they should have the same rate. On the other hand, maybe we were being rather selfish in our point of view in saying: "We're not going to have cheap labour up in the north in case the company decides to shove more and more work up there." So we had our point of view in relation to that. But nevertheless we felt that basically we were on the right lines—that anybody working for Fords in the United Kingdom should be on the same rates of pay for the same kind of work.

Arising from that we developed, and we're still developing today, a convenors' combine. We meet regularly, we decide what our claim's going to be, we decide what issues are going to be taken up with the negotiating committee, and these are then put to the negotiating committee, that is, the union side of the NJNC. Invariably, these are taken up as we put them, with very little alteration. To cover that, the trade unions also have the right to meet JWCs (Joint Works' Committees) twice a year. Each plant has a JWC, and this varies in size according to the plant. Twice a year the national officials, those that care to come along, they meet us, and we can at least put what we decide as convenors to that body, and therefore it becomes binding on all the trade unions to take it through. The convenors therefore set the seal on negotiations.

At this point in time the convenors' committee has never been better organised in its history. We have a set-up which is recognised by the officials, correspondence is sent out to the chairman of the convenors and circulated then to all other convenors, i.e. all information goes directly back to the plants. Also, if we oppose anything in relation to the FNJNC they won't arbitrarily push it through. This has to have the consent of the convenors, and by that I mean the convenors, then works committee, right back to the stewards. The company know clearly that they're not going to go back to pre-1969, where you had a bunch of national officials agreeing to something: if we don't agree to it, they're in a right mix.

All the experiences of negotiation in the last 30 years have brought us to the point where we're poised to take over negotiations ourselves. In other words, we're trying to move to a situation where we as convenors do our own negotiations. We don't need the national trade union officials at that level at all. We only need them or the Executives of the different unions for support when we go into dispute or something like that. That's where we seem to be poised at this point in time. We're not that too far away. It is also true to say that within Fords we too have our toolmakers seeking their own negotiations; we've been having that for the last eighteen months or so. But I think steadfastly that we've kept solid, and I think that, in finality, they would see the good sense in the point of having one set of negotiations, and I think you can only have one set of negotiations for the hourly-paid. I don't think you can split them up.

I've already said that historically, in the 1950s and 1960s we used to battle on two fronts, against the company and against the official organs of the union concerned, whether it was the TGWU or AEU. Our first loyalties are basically to the shop stewards' committee. You don't think in every case of what union you belong to, because you're an amalgamation of unions, you become a stewards' committee representing a plant. In companies like British Leyland they have what they call the senior steward of individual unions, but we don't have that. We have the one shop stewards' committee, and they elect a work's committee, and they elect their convenor, regardless of what union. They don't look and see the percent-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

age of union members and vote for the biggest union. Obviously, you do develop a union allegiance. But when you are down in the plant, when you're a convenor of the plant, you conduct yourself in relation to that job, no matter what union you belong to.

Relations with the Staff

B.P. If one talks about the question of staff, over the years they have also got organised. The foremen are organised in ASTMS and they also have a fair degree of communication between plants. When an issue affects foremen in one plant, they can usually exercise pressure in other plants. Also the technicians are organised in the AUEW (TASS) and the clerical staff are organised in the Association of Clerical, Technical and Supervisory Staffs of the T&GWU. We have a situation today where basically management meets these three unions together. Usually, the company tries to get settlements with the hourly-rated, then they meet and get agreements with the staff side. This basically is the set-up which is now going forward. I can't see any moves at present for getting the hourly-paid and the staff closer together. In relation to ASTMS we're drifting further apart, especially on discipline. Every time one of their members gets hit, they want the man immediately dismissed, which we don't think is right. This is the sort of friction. The ASTMS members are our immediate foremen and supervisors, but this isn't true for the ACTSS and the TASS. We get on fairly well with them, they give us information, especially the TASS members because they are in a position to get important information; for example, future product plans and the sourcing of parts, etc., on the European level. At this point in time we've never really moved together, although we've often thought about it.

To broaden the picture, we have had contact with our friends in West Germany, France and Belgium in relation to the Ford plants. Now Spain is also coming into this picture. We have had regular meetings for some period now, and we talk about, and exchange, our points of view. We had a slight difference when we first started meeting, because some of the people sitting on the German work's councils didn't even belong to a trade union. We belonged to a trade union and we felt that they should also belong to a trade union if they were going to meet us. If you look now at most of the plants over there you will find that nearly all the work's council members at least do belong to a trade union. We still have our problems, because their work's councils consist of staff and hourly-rated. We have not come to that stage where we sit down with our staff, but they have; that's their law and their work's council. When we meet the Europeans we insist that we meet the hourly-rated people separately, and the staff side go and meet the staff side. The only tangible result of the European links is that we can get up-to-date information in relation to wages and movement of jobs from plant to plant. There are no moves yet to stimulate joint action. We are trying (and I say trying) to bring our bargaining dates nearer, so that we may be in a position, as regards bargaining in Germany, Belgium and France, to bargain at the same time. As far as possible we have regular meetings, although you must bear in mind that the British workers are the poor relations and we have to rely on the Germans for the cash. This is a fact of life. When they come over here, they pay for their own bed and board. We buy them a drink, but when we go over there we expect them to pay for our bed, board and drink!

The Fiesta

D.C. When we learned about Ford having to get into the small car market with the Fiesta, about two years ago, the information we had was that they were going to do it in Saarluis, which is one of their newer German factories. We don't know the total investment, but it was very heavy, though. On top of that, they built a totally new plant in Valencia because of all the attractions of Spain. It was an expanding market and they had a very efficient labour relations system: it consisted of a guard with a carbine! I'm making this point because I can't doubt for one minute that that's the way they saw the thing operating. In Valencia, again, there was very heavy investment indeed: we're talking in terms of very modern equipment, new plant, capable of turning out a totally new model. The intention was to import them to the United Kingdom. I'm not a financial wizard, but I would imagine that a large number of small cars coming into the country must add to the balance of payments crisis, that's the first consideration. And if we weren't worried about that, we would certainly be worried about the loss of jobs in the UK plants, because lately people are turning towards the lighter cars because of the energy crisis.

Our initial attack on the company was: why don't you produce the Fiesta in this country?—and they gave us a very short answer, something like, "It's none of your business where we spend our money", which wasn't very encouraging and I suppose that might be one of the justifications for Bullock. The fact is there was no consultation at all. They were quite willing on a national scale to import what they thought was at that stage so many thousands of units a year, but I would imagine that the current sale of the model would

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have seen it well over that figure. They were quite prepared, you see, to hazard the position of the British balance of payments. They were prepared to do that as a company, for obvious financial reasons. But in addition to that, of course, every light car which is imported is a light car less made in this country, and therefore it brings a loss of jobs. It means a loss to the tooling industry, as well, as it's a very profound thing when you're tooling a car, the sort of equipment that's needed.

As shop stewards we therefore took the decision as to whether we should limit ourselves to arguing about whether there's enough paper in the toilets, or whether the roof is leaking—the usual sort of shop stewards' run-about. We had a discussion about it and decided that certainly we should tackle this question and argue that it was part of a trade union function to get involved in the question of investment. Naturally we got very little response from the company; their view was that we were paid to go there and wield a hammer and they were paid to sit up in an office somewhere and do the thinking.

We launched a petition and had meetings in the plant, gathered several thousand signatures to a piece of paper, and we then met a number of MPs at the House of Commons, local MPs and those who had worked in the machine tool industry. From that there were a number of exchanges between the government and the MPs about the question of the Fiesta. Ford had begun at the same time to realise that the market was larger than even they anticipated. They decided to launch the Fiesta into the USA as well, with a larger engine, and therefore there came a point where the interests of the workforce and the company started coinciding and dictating that they had to go down the same road as we did. I don't know whether it's to our credit or discredit. I do know that as a result of all these meetings with the MPs, we ultimately met up with Wedgwood Benn, when he was Minister of Industry, and the intention was to form a tri-partite meeting between the Ford Motor Company, the trade union movement and various Ministers. Within a fortnight of that, Tony Benn was fired! But by raising the level of the trade union movement by getting involved in investment we were able, in some measure, to bring pressure to bear on the company to produce this model in this country. This helps employment in Dagenham.

Exporting the Fiesta

D.C. In the Dagenham environs to that degree we've now found that there will be about 3,000 additional jobs established in manufacturing the Fiesta. Certainly it's had a profound effect on the balance of payments, and we've taken it one stage further by challenging the company now by saying, "Where do you intend to export these cars?" and they said, "We don't intend to do that. That isn't the name of the game at all. We're not exporting them, we're only building for the United Kingdom. The question of whether and where we export them, that will be decided by the big fellows over in Detroit, and we certainly don't intend to have you making motor cars in Dagenham and knocking out the German or Spanish production." None the less, we went through a similar exercise and we wrote to our MPs, we got questions asked here and there—and again I think there might be some political embarrassment on the company itself—and we now find that the Fiesta is being exported from Dagenham. We are doing the Finnish market, the market in Denmark and the market in Holland, not necessarily the mass markets of the world, I would agree, but none the less some would say it shows you that it can be done without sitting on boards of directors.

Against that, of course, I don't know the exact sums of money invested in Dagenham, but I would say they were infinitesimal compared with what's gone into Spain. We have a plant in Dagenham, I won't say it's derelict, but we have presses laying around there which I think South Kensington would be proud to own in their engineering section, and that's the truth! If anyone points to this as a success story of trade union involvement in getting jobs one has to say that in finality we have very little control over where the jobs go or how they're manufactured.

Shop Stewards and Wider Issues

D.C. Lucas Aerospace contributed to trade union thinking to move beyond the limits of wages and hours. In Ford we saw a situation where jobs and models were being taken away from the United Kingdom. The classic case was the Granada. We no longer make the Granada in this country. And when you look up the next lot of import/export figures of motor cars, don't believe those figures—they're hopelessly wrong and distorted. Fords import far more cars than that. The point I'm making is that Fords were able to take the Granada from the UK and establish it in Germany. They did it also with the Capri and we are now importing them as completed models. These are contributory factors as to why shop stewards' committees are becoming more involved in these questions, where multinationals because of their size and resources can switch production around. Also the fact that we are barred from certain markets. If you look at the figures for the last ten years there has been a dramatic decline in the number of models exported from the UK. If you look at the North

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American market, that was totally handed over to Germany. Fords obviously had their reasons, such as favourable exchange rates and they had the power, despite the balance of payments crisis we've had in this country and the need for hard currency.

B.P. The shop-floor worker is interested in this, because he actually sees the parts shipped in from abroad, and he doesn't see the parts he used to make which were shipped out for export. Detroit decide where they're going to sell our cars, it's not a free market; we cannot sell British-made Ford cars in Western Germany, because that market is barred from us. This goes on quite a bit; Australia took quite a lot from us as we used to have a market on knock-down stuff which we sent to Australia. Only part of it is still there. The worker sees in this the danger of finding himself out of a job.

Bear in mind, he's told twice a year—this is one of the company's answers to Bullock—how hard the Japanese are working, how hard the Germans are working, and how hard the Belgians are working in relation to how hard we're working. They ask themselves, is the company going to shift it all abroad and import the car? So they get interested and this stimulates stewards and we're able to apply pressure, because we can apply pressure, as Danny's just said, because we can either make the stuff or stop it going to different countries if we wish. The worker on the shop-floor sees it as that level, he sees that his job in finality can go.

Relations Between British and European Workers

B.P. When we took KD [knock-down—Ed.] work off Germany (I don't know whether we're cheap labour, but we can produce the knock-down parts and ship them abroad cheaper than Germany) the Germans bombarded us with leaflets. The same happened when they wanted a meeting with us because they felt there shouldn't be a plant built in Spain. They said they had the capacity to produce the Fiesta. We said, "We're prepared to go along with you and apply pressure". We can do this because once again the tooling is in this country and Germany and not in Spain, and therefore if we didn't tool up for Spain they could only build the shell of a plant but they would never get anything from there. In fact the Germans did not have the power to apply the pressure, and therefore there was no joint action.

There is little co-operation with Germany when British and German workers are interested in the same work. They're not happy now because they're saddled with the Granada which doesn't sell too well in Germany, and they're also saddled with the Capri which left Halewood, and is another very low seller. And therefore Cologne has got two low-selling cars. There again, the Halewood lads want the Capri back in Halewood, but as regards meeting together and coming to some decisions, that's not there.

D.C. Apart from the ideological basis of trade unionism being different in Germany at the moment, what we're getting at is this: if we've to sit down with German workers we would be talking about problems that the Ford Motor Company had created for all of us, the Germans, the Spaniards and us. In other words, we are always as trade unionists trying to catch up on something that someone's plotted against us. Industrial democracy, if it means anything at all, would stop those problems being created at that stage and we should know what is going on. The German Ford workers have recently had more than a raw deal; they had big redundancies and short-time two or three years ago, when Ford made a most massive loss in Germany, and they never boasted about that in the papers. In the manufacture of any commodity, whether it's a motor car or a light bulb, it doesn't matter how hard a man works, it depends what equipment he has available. From the recent official reports, we understand that the average British worker in the car industry has got far less investment per man in his hands, as compared with the Germans or Japanese. A multi-national company has the power to direct investment here or there, and totally destroy the economic basis of a country. They've got these tremendous powers, a multi-national can do that. If we had a greater say in running the industry we wouldn't see ourselves in competition with foreign workers. We'd want to say, "We intend to do this or that, how do you see it going?" Instead, we haven't got the information, we're really fighting against something all the time, we never have the opportunity of galvanising a more positive approach to the economy.

EURORED
No. 6, 40p
Includes
Election Manifesto of PCF
Crisis of the State—Interview with Poulantzas
SOCIALIST EUROPE
No. 3, 50p
Includes
Trotsky's Revolution Betrayed
Carrillo's Analysis of the Soviet Union
Available from
CENTRAL BOOKS
37 Grays Inn Road
London WC1X 8PS

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Interpreting Punk Rock

Dave Laing

(*The author wrote* Sound of our Time *(1969) and his forthcoming book is entitled* An Introduction to the Marxist Theory of Art.)

During the 1960s, popular music underwent a qualitative change, through the work of The Beatles, Bob Dylan and their successors. This new and ambitious music was closely associated with the various youth and "counter-cultural" movements of the decade which with varying degrees of clarity opposed aspects of advanced capitalist society.[1] But, by 1970, very little remained of this "rock revolution". According to the former Beatle John Lennon, the dream was over. For all the advocacy of alternative life-styles and utopian idealism, the power structure remained intact.

One of the few marxist accounts of this decline suggested that it was the *success* of the music and the "cultural revolt of proletarian youth" which explained the impasse in which it found itself. On the sexual and cultural front, in opposition to the authoritarianism of the family and school, the battle had largely been won. But the "latent *general* rejection of a complete life-situation" (which the writer considered to be concealed within the cultural revolt) could "only be released into consciousness by the passage to *politics* proper. Nothing guarantees that British pop music will make this transition. Its eclipse will perhaps already be visible tomorrow."[2]

The first half of the 1970s seemed to justify this pessimism. Most of the dominant trends in pop music showed a regression from the achievements of the 1960s. At one pole was the exploitative "teenybopper" music, purveyed by well-drilled "idols" for pubescent children. At the other, the experimental musicians of the 1960s adopted a pretentious and apolitical stance of "artistic quality" which usually meant the use of electronic instruments and poetic verses about elves or spaceships. In between were the empty bombast of "heavy rock" and what came to be called "glam-rock". This genre was a curious mixture of apocalyptic imagery and a kind of "Orwellian" social criticism, epitomised in the erratic career of David Bowie and his fascination with the paradoxes of stardom.[3]

The stylised extremism of Bowie and others was an influence on the style of the earliest practitioners of punk rock, who emerged during 1976. But in general, punk rock was a negation of those dominant trends in popular music. It contained attitudes, approaches and subject-matter that had been excluded from the practice of popular music, which by the mid-1970s was more than ever dominated by a small group of multi-national conglomerates (EMI, CBS, RCA, WEA-Kinney, Philips-Polydor) and their control of the manufacture and distribution of records.

The unity of punk rock as a phenomenon lay in this external relation to pre-existing popular music, and in the shock tactics with which its exponents went about their work. Internally, however, punk rock was intensely contradictory, a fact masked by the eagerness with which the media and the music industry presented it as the latest musical craze. In analysing punk from a marxist viewpoint it is important to avoid the temptation simply to be for it (because it's rebellious) or against it (because it's decadent or sexist). Frequently, both progressive and reactionary elements appear in the work of the same musician, sometimes in the same song. In this article, I want to try to disentangle these contradictory aspects of punk rock, as well as analyse its impact on popular music as a whole, and to discuss the question of the "social base" of the phenomenon.

Political Themes

Before moving on to those issues, I should briefly describe punk as a musical genre, and give some indication of its impact. Probably the most striking aspect of the phenomenon, for marxists, is its introduction of political subject-matter into rock music. Although "protest" songs were a strong feature of folk music during the early 1960s, and a few of the folk-rock songs of the era dealt with war or civil rights, the radicalism of the "rock

[1] On this topic, see Martin Jacques, "Trends In Youth Culture", *Marxism Today*, September 1973.

[2] R. Merton, "For A Rock Aesthetic", *New Left Review* 59, pp. 90-1.

[3] This brief list necessarily omits less popular trends that represented progressive developments, notably reggae and singer-songwriters like Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon and Carole King.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revolution" seldom involved direct reference to current political matters: it remained steadfastly cultural.

Punk groups, however, have produced songs about unemployment (*Career Opportunities, Right To Work*), the Notting Hill carnival (*White Riot*), the monarchy (*God Save The Queen*) and general expressions of an apocalyptic rebellion (*Anarchy In The UK, London's Burning*). Since many of these songs have not been broadcast as a result of formal or covert censorship, it is worth dealing in some detail with the most prominent of them.

God Save The Queen was released as a recording by the Sex Pistols at the height of last year's Jubilee euphoria. In a harsh, staccato style, the song expressed a cynical and critical view of the monarchy. The words veered from overstatement calculated to outrage ("God save the Queen/And her fascist regime/Made you a moron/A potential H-bomb") to succinct irony ("God save the Queen/Cos tourists are money . . ."). The song ends on the repeated line "No future in England's dreaming", an accurate diagnosis of the surfeit of regressive nostalgia involved in the whole Jubilee process.

The phrase "N.F.—No Future" was later taken up in anti-fascist propaganda, while a National Front publication described Sex Pistols' singer Johnny Rotten as a "gormless ethno-masochist". Rotten, whose real name is John Lydon, was born in London of Irish parents. Despite radio censorship, and the refusal of multiple retailers such as Boots and W. H. Smith to stock it, the record sold over 200,000 copies and featured in the hit parade. The abnormal, "underground" conditions which surrounded it must have added to the attention with which the record was heard by those who managed to acquire a copy. The whole episode was probably the most effective political intervention by a song since the "protest" era. It's worth noting also that the choice of the same title as the national anthem was an especially effective blow against ruling class propaganda. The subversive parody of such material has a long history.

Characteristics of Punk Rock

The word "punk" was an American slang term describing certain groups of youths at the bottom of the social scale, such as hoboes and black homosexual convicts. It gradually took on a more general derisive meaning, which was softened through time. A British equivalent might be the word "bugger". Within music, it was first applied to a school of teenage rock music in America inspired by the style of the British groups led by The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. Later it was attached to another brash trend centred on New York and influenced by David Bowie and others in its use of sensationalism. The title was finally given to the new British groups by journalists who thought they had spotted key similarities between those musicians and the New Yorkers. During the early stages of punk's brief history there was an attempt to rechristen the genre "new wave" and thus make it more assimilable to the pre-existing popular music structures. The term was appropriate to a few groups whose style was predominantly a return to the "youth revolt" mode of the 1960s (e.g. The Jam), but it obscured the hostility to the status quo which fuelled the major part of punk rock.

That hostility took three major forms: a challenge to the "capital-intensive" production of music within the orbit of the multi-nationals, a rejection of the ideology of "artistic excellence" which was influential among established musicians, and the aggressive injection of new subject-matter into popular song, much of which (including politics) had previously been taboo.

The capital-intensive nature of recording has resulted from the development of sophisticated technology in recording studios during the last decade. The manipulation of that technology has become accepted as the pre-condition for successful and competent recorded music. Access to these means of production is dependent on the ability to lay out considerable sums of money to pay for the making of a record. The musician is therefore very much in the hands of those possessing such funds, who are predominantly the large record companies. Under most recording contracts, the heavy costs of recording are paid for out of the musician's royalties.

This state of affairs has been underwritten by the aesthetic of artistic excellence already referred to. Dissatisfied with their status as "entertainers", many of the musicians with roots in the music of 1960s took on the stance of "artistes", with a complex and highly detailed recording as their "work of art". But the key feature of this stream of "progressive rock", as it was originally and misleadingly named, is a grandiloquent emphasis on size. Groups spend months perfecting the minutiae of recorded sound, and then invest in expensive sound reproduction equipment to enable to present a note-perfect copy of the recording in live concerts, which increasingly have the sole function of advertising the disc itself.

The result, not surprisingly, has been that a major effect of such music is a celebration of its own opulence and grandeur. It frequently becomes a hymn to the age of the multi-nationals, notwithstanding the lyrics about goblins or outer space. Very few musicians have mastered the new technological means, rather than being mastered by it. The earlier work of 10cc and the more recent Pink

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Floyd records are examples of the use of such materials to focus on social themes rather than asocial ones.

Punk records initially marked a sharp break with this whole trend. Typically, they were made quickly and cheaply in a small recording studio, often in the group's home city rather than in London. They were manufactured and distributed locally through a company set up by a manager or local entrepreneur, such as a record shop owner. In Manchester, punk groups have made use of the organisational expertise of Music Force, a co-operative set up by local musicians as an alternative to the control of middlemen like managers, agents and promoters over live performances.

This development did not, of course, solve the problem of reaching a *national* audience outside the network of distribution controlled by the multi-nationals and other large record companies. Indeed, in some instances the local records have acted as stepping-stones to contracts with the major companies. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily a "defeat", since punk groups with this background may well be ideologically equipped to continue a productive struggle *within* the structures of the music industry.

A further aspect of this "do-it-yourself" element in punk rock has been the proliferation of "fanzines" devoted to the music. These duplicated magazines are produced by small groups of listeners to the music to express their own response to punk and to criticise the accounts of it provided by the commercial music press. These journals are very uneven in character, but the best of them indicate the existence of an active and involved audience for punk rock, in contrast to the passivity and simple acceptance required of its listeners by mainstream popular music.

Style and Subject Matter

The musical forms adopted by punk rock are similarly contrasted to those of the technological styles described above. Instrumentally, it presents itself as direct and straightforward, in a clear line from the so-called "classic" style of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s. A limited range of chords are employed and a heavy rhythmic emphasis replaces concern for melody and improvisation. One punk song is called *I Never Went To Music School*. The singing style rejects both the rather colourless clarity of progressive rock and the various "white soul" modes typified by Mick Jagger or Rod Stewart, modes adapted from genres of black music. Instead, there is an apparently artless "natural" vocal approach, which, on close inspection, turns out to have roots in the cockney-novelty singing of Anthony Newley and David Bowie, but also, via Slade, in the chanting of football fans.

This vocal style is, perhaps, the most significant innovation of punk rock at the level of musical sound, since its effect is to represent within a public communications medium a form of expression which previously was merely the object of media reproach ("obscene" chants at football matches, etc.). Of course, the singing of Johnny Rotten or The Clash's Joe Strummer is not a direct reflection of the terraces. In the transition to the recording studio a transformation occurs. But now, within popular music a working-class voice is possible beyond the comic novelty of character actors. There are parallels to this process elsewhere in the arts, in the Scottish comedy of Billy Connolly and in Barry Hines' Yorkshire dramatic writing (*Kes, The Price of Coal*). Bourgeois hegemony in the cultural sphere works through tone of voice (Standard English and its musical-vocal equivalents) as well as through the dissemination of specific ideas (indeed, the former help to legitimate the latter). The struggle to establish alternative ways of speaking in the media should not be underestimated.

If vocally, punk represents an advance within the musical field, its instrumental ethos is more doubtful. In the years since the introduction of the classic rock 'n' roll style, this form has become mythologised as signifying a pure, simple and innocent rebellion or release of strong emotion, unhindered by social or political complexities. Thus, the Rolling Stones, who on every other criterion must rank as reactionaries, are given an alibi because they are still the (nostalgic) personification of "rock 'n' roll energy". Historically, however, this energy has usually taken an aggressive form, and since the Rolling Stones and other rock bands focused primarily on sexuality, the aggression was usually sexual and sexist in character. The implications of all this for a progressive (and especially feminist) use of the rock 'n' roll style are unclear. Is the style synonomous with its past meanings (machismo, denigration of women), or is it a neutral arrangement of sound to take on new meaning in a different practice of music?

Punk rock has proved to be a sort of laboratory in which possible solutions to questions like these can be glimpsed, for it characteristically combines the rock 'n' roll musical ethos with subject-matter which is broadly sexual or political. The result has been a whole range of ideological effects. Much of the work of The Stranglers, for example, merely extends the machismo aspect of the music, while apparently being more "realistic" in its lyrics (to this extent this group is very similar to the early Rolling Stones, whose songs of male domination were praised for "exposing the reality" behind the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

façade of sentimentality purveyed by other songs). On the other hand, a purely political song like *God Save The Queen* redirects the aggressive energy from a sexual to a political target. And, even more powerfully, *Oh Bondage Up Yours!* by X-Ray Specs (with a woman singer and writer) redirects the aggression within the space of the song itself. The verses alternate between an apparent hymn to the delights of bondage as a sexual activity and an attack on social bondage, with the title line becoming a cry of liberation.

Much has been made of the concentration of punk rock on bizarre sexuality in its songs and its styles of dress. But it is crucial to distinguish between these things in themselves, and the social significance they possess. Punk is overwhelmingly concerned with the latter, in bringing it to the surface and, usually, mocking it. For these "deviations" are not so much excluded from ordinary social and media discourse, but repressed by it. In this relationship of repression, the apparent opposites of the puritan sexual ethic and pornography reinforce each other through the fascination exerted on the former by the forbidden.

In general, the punk attitude works to expose the mutual dependence of the concepts of normality and abnormality in sexual matters, and expresses a hostility towards the obsession with the subject shared by puritans and pornographers. The very name of the Sex Pistols is an ironic reference to the fetishing of "sex" and "violence" as definitions of social problems. But does the manipulation of taboo material by bringing it into the open destroy that taboo or reinforce it? In this distinction (which is similar to that between the different uses of rock 'n' roll music in punk) lies the basis for an evaluation of the different kinds of "shock-effect" perpetrated by punk rock.

Shock-effect and Leisure-effect

The term "shock-effect" is taken from the writing of Walter Benjamin, a German marxist of the 1930s, who was among the first to examine the role and nature of the new mass-media of this century. Benjamin felt that these media (film, photography, radio, gramophone) operated in a very different way to the traditional high arts (painting, sculpture, orchestral concert). The traditional arts had their origins in pre-capitalist societies, but the new media of "mechanical reproduction" could only have emerged within industrial capitalism, with its technological innovation and its forms of mass-production.

Mass-production implied a mass-market for the products, which was provided by a proletariat which was culturally developed in certain ways through its mass institutions, and universal education as well a surplus income available to purchase cultural commodities). Unlike many theorists of mass-culture, therefore, Benjamin emphasised the active aspect of the proletariat's role in the shaping of the new media. They were not simply an economic market for the media industry's products, but were responsible for a social demand for a new kind of artistic activity. Benjamin wrote that:

> "Mechanical reproduction of art changes the reaction of the masses towards art. The reactionary attitude towards a Picasso painting changes into the progressive reaction towards a Chaplin movie. The progressive reaction is characterised by the direct intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert."[4]

In his attack on those who viewed the new media as simply a regression from the quality of the traditional high arts, Benjamin paid little attention to the way in which capitalist control of the media can inhibit the development of this "progressive reaction". Taking his formula, we can say that while all media products aim at "visual and emotional enjoyment", the majority do not allow for "the orientation of the expert" in the audience response to them. Benjamin's use of the word "expert" is perhaps confusing. He means a *critical* response on the part of a viewer or listener, in the sense that he or she will be provoked to thinking and questioning by it. In Benjamin's other writings, the plays of Bertolt Brecht are presented as key examples of progressive art which aim at inducing this "orientation of the expert".

Benjamin saw the "shock-effect" as one way in which this orientation could be produced. It was opposed to an attitude of contemplation which, in the decline of bourgeois society, was "a school for asocial conduct", an evasion of social pressures. In contrast, the shock-effect of, for instance, a Dadaist painting or poem "hits the spectator like a bullet, it happens to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality". Benjamin adds, however, that to be productive, the shock-effect "should be cushioned by heightened presence of mind", its jolt should have a cognitive aspect as well as a tactile one.

In applying this concept to a discussion of popular music and of punk rock, it is necessary to posit the alternative effect with which the shock-effect is in contradiction. This might be termed the "leisure-effect", since its characteristics are those pertaining to the conventional bourgeois definition of "leisure", as an area of passivity as a respite from, and as preparation for, work. The leisure-apparatuses of bourgeois society (including popular

[4] "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

music) are therefore geared to the production of leisure-effects whose main features are a passivity of response and a disengagement from other areas of social activity. Thus, although the raw material of television programmes or popular songs may have originated in other social practices, the leisure-apparatus aims to transform that material into "visual and emotional enjoyment", eliminating the "orientation of the expert", which might lead the audience to make active connections between the programme or song and those other areas of social practice. The shock-effect interrupts this process by introducing new material in forms which are undigested by the leisure apparatus, and unfamiliar as musical material to the audience, who cannot regard it passively, but are jolted by it.

Shock-effects in Punk Rock

Punk music is thus a form in which both shock-effects and leisure-effects are present, but in which, generally, the former are dominant. It is, however, necessary to distinguish between different levels of shock-effect, in terms of their ability to dominate or be dominated by the leisure-effect. For in many instances, yesterday's shock-effect serves only as a rejuvenating influence on today's leisure-effect. Punk clothing, torn and held together by safety-pins in a parody of expensive fashions and sexually fetishistic clothing, was soon transformed by the avant-garde of the fashion industry into a new and expensive trend.

Another "empty" shock-effect indulged in by a minority of punk groups and followers was the sporting of swastika armbands as decorations, thereby transferring them from a serious (taboo) context into a frivolous one. But because this was simply a naming of the taboo, it cannot be said to have destroyed it. The ambiguity of the gesture in fact mirrored and strengthened the ambiguous attitude of attraction and repulsion towards Nazi regalia and atrocities, which is a feature of British culture.

A second "intermediate" category of shock-effect is that which challenges the content of popular music rather than its structure. By content here, I mean the raw material of the song's lyrics. Thus, the social realism of many of The Clash's songs about unemployment or boredom is treated in much the same way as earlier rock groups dealt with the pre-digested themes of romance or a more individualised frustration. Similarly, one of the punk classics, *My Love Lies Limp* by Alternative TV is a remarkably funny song of disgust with a sexually-saturated milieu.

That challenge is the hallmark of the "structural" shock-effect, two instances of which I have previously mentioned. These are the distinctive vocal style of punk singers which is important since a key determinant of a listener's response to a song is the inherited connotations of its vocal presentation (crooner, torch singer, vocal harmony group, white soul, etc.), and the internally contradictory structure of the lyrics in *Oh Bondage Up Yours!* A more radical disruption of the conventional lyric-structure occurs in the Sex Pistols' *Holidays In The Sun*. The words of this song are a kind of collage of media and travel brochure cliches and parodic references to them, clustered around the media themes associated with Germany —Belsen, "reasonable economy", the Berlin Wall. Wrenched out of their place in what might be called the *Daily Mail* discourse, the cliches sound empty and ridiculous.

The political significance of this kind of shock-effect depends on its ability to present itself as a seamless webb, fully coherent and non-contradictory and thus natural and eternal. Activities like these punk songs then work to undermine that process of legitimation. The aesthetic roots of such a practice lie in the history of the avant-garde—Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism and Situationism. The Sex Pistols' mentor Malcolm McLaren was an ex-art student of the 1968 generation and his enthusiasm for the avant-garde undoubtedly influenced the group's orientation as well as their bizarre contractual history—which included the cancellation of contracts by two large record companies before any discs had been released.

A further arena of the structural shock-effect is that of public performance by punk groups whose character varies from a re-creation of the frenzied audience response of earlier cultural revolts to the calculated assault on the conventional audience/performer relationship by the Sex Pistols as well as lesser-known groups like Alternative TV. As in other avant-gardist activities, the political value of taunting or frustrating the expectations of the audience is the extent to which it provokes an awareness in them of their own position in the leisure apparatus.

Political Significance

In planning this article, I had intended to deal at some length with the view that punk's primary political significance lay in the degree to which it was a catalyst or an expression of a specific social group clustered around it in a "sub-culture". On this view, the unity of punk as a movement would have been based not on the precarious relation of negativity with the status quo in popular music (the position I have outlined) but on a symbiotic relationship with all or part of the youth generation currently faced with massive unemployment.

Several recent events, however, indicate the imminent collapse of punk as a unified phenomenon, although many punk groups will undoubtedly

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

continue in existence, in different parts of the popular music spectrum. Some bands will be "rehabilitated" within the music industry's new trend of "power pop", whose title suggests the extent to which it is shorn of all but the most innocuous shock-effects of punk. Others may re-form into a small avant-garde wing of popular music, akin to the position occupied by the jazz-inflicted work of Henry Cow, Robert Wyatt and their co-thinkers. In a different direction, both The Clash and, it seems, Johnny Rotten (following the recent spectacular self-immolation of the Sex Pistols as a group) are experimenting with a union of their more subversive brand of punk and reggae music.

These developments seem to undermine the view that punk might have been the means of expression of a class fraction whose unity was located at a "deeper" level of the social formation, but it is important to stress the *theoretical* limitations of such a position. These rest, in my view, on an underestimation of the role and autonomy of what I have described as the leisure apparatuses of the society. The theory of the "youth sub-culture", expressed most fully in the collection *Resistance Through Rituals*[5] argues that a working-class youth sub-culture (the Mods or the Rockers) is constructed by the acquisition of various elements from parent or dominant cultures (music, clothes, means of transport) which are then re-combined to express a new meaning which "can resolve, albeit 'magically' the contradictions hidden or unresolved in the parent culture", i.e. that of the working class as a whole. Thus the sub-culture is the site of an unconscious class struggle, displaced from its "true" arena (work, politics) into leisure, where victory can only be achieved in a temporary symbolic or "magical" manner.

This position invites a variety of objections, but here I shall focus only on one which is relevant to the question of popular music. The problem is that of the social space in which the sub-cultural activity occurs, which appears to be somewhere outside and free of the constraints of the leisure apparatuses. However, the marxist theory of the ideological superstructure of the capitalist social formation, whose apparatuses have a strategic place in the reproduction of the system's relations of production, posits that all ideological struggle must occur within those apparatuses, and in relation to their structuration by the dominant ideology. The "sub-culture" is thus a series of practices occurring across several leisure and other apparatuses, rather than some sort of liberated area which is purely "working class". The focus then shifts from the politically sterile one of spotting how working-class youth is "unconsciously" resisting bourgeois domination (and the sub-cultural theory does not present us with any mechanism by which this resistance can be brought to consciousness) to one which can locate the contradictions being opened up by challenges to bourgeois hegemony within specific aparatuses.

Conclusion

The revolution in popular music which made it primarily a youth music began with rock 'n' roll in 1955 and went a stage further with the "cultural revolt" of the 1960s. It was a revolution that took place in an era of economic expansion and increasing living standards. These factors coloured even the most progressive of the ideological developments in rock music and its associated youth cultures. Their radicalism was a radical consumerism, aimed at the authoritarian figures (parents, police, politicians) who barred the way to new kinds of consumption (pop festivals, clothes, drugs, sex).

The historical limits of that period are only apparent now that it has been succeeded by a very different economic situation where, in the words of one commentator, "teenage frustration is caused not by fuddy-duddy parents, not by easily-shocked adults, but by an intractable economic situation". In the past, the impact of the "shock-effects" of 1950's rock 'n' roll and 1960's rock music caused a reorganisation of the music industry and its leisure apparatus to provide for new kinds of consumers and consumption. Punk rock represented the first important cultural development in the moment of transition between the period of increasing consumption and one where the expectations of that phase have been frustrated. Hence the intensity of its confusions and contradictions and the ambivalence of the leisure apparatus towards it (censorship/exploitation).

Unlike earlier musics, punk rock has not been integrated into a restructured music industry, so much as *fractured* along the lines of its own internal contradictions. Its most avant-garde elements, which challenged the structure of an orderly music for consumption under the sign of the leisure-effect, remain excluded. Meanwhile, those who have concentrated on a shift in subject-matter within the conventional formal structures are inside the music industry without necessarily becoming integrated. The introduction of politics into the heart of the leisure-apparatus by The Clash and the Tom Robinson Band is one sign that the demise of punk may mark the beginning rather than the end of a fruitful phase of ideological struggle within popular music.

[5] Edited by members of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University and published by Hutchinson.

Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, WC2E 8HY, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U.), Watford, Herts—27251

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Collet's

LONDON BOOKSHOP
64-66 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0BD
01-836 6306

New Titles in Foreign Language Section:

BUCI—GLUCKSMANN—"Gramsci et l'Etat"	**£8.95**
POULANTZAS—"L'Etat, Le Pouvoir et le Socialisme"	**6.25**
,, (Ed.)—"La Crise de l'Etat"	**6.00**

* * * * *

INGHAM, HALL et al—"Football Hooliganism"	**1.50**
G. THOMSON—"The First Philosophers"	**2.50**
I. STEEDMAN—"Marx After Sraffa"	**7.25**
LEGUM & LEE—"Conflict in the Horn of Africa"	**2.50**
N. HADJINICOLAOU—"Art History & Class Struggle"	**3.60**
A. MUNRO—"Lives of Girls & Women" (and other Women's Press Publications)	**1.00**
SMART & SMART (Eds.)—"Women, Sexuality and Social Control"	**2.95**
L.R.D.—"The National Front Investigated"	**0.25**

FOR THE WIDEST RANGE OF LITERATURE BY AND FOR THE LEFT

Opening hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday	9.30 to 6.00
Thursday	9.30 to 7.00
Friday	10.30 to 7.00

FOR MAIL ORDERS please add 35p per book postage and packing.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MARX-ENGELS COLLECTED WORKS

in fifty volumes

The definitive English-language edition. £5 per volume.

VOLUME EIGHT (1848-1849)

This volume is the centre volume of three (volumes 7, 8 and 9) which contain a complete collection of Marx's and Engels's continuous analysis, originally published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, as participants and observers in these revolutionary years in Vienna, Berlin and Paris. Volume 7 appeared in 1977; Volume 9 will be published on May 18th.

Available £5

New in Paperback

THE PREHISTORIC AEGEAN

GEORGE THOMSON

The first paperback edition of a work which broke new ground in its exploration of the social background of epic poetry and Early Greek philosophy. The first of two volumes of *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, the second (*The First Philosophers*) is also available, in paperback at £2.50.

"might play a role in our generation comparable to that played in an earlier day by Frazer's *The Golden Bough*"—*Listener*.

626 pp *paperback* £4.50

LAWRENCE & WISHART
39 MUSEUM STREET
LONDON WC1A 1LQ

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW: 1978
No. 3

WASHINGTON'S STAKE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
E. Pahad

LINKING THE PRESENT WITH THE FUTURE
I. Cox

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE YOUNG
K. Trebaczkiewicz

CAPITALISM AFTER THE 1974-75 CRISIS
M. Schmidt

Price: 35p plus postage
£4.50 for one year
from

CENTRAL BOOKS LIMITED
37 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8PS

MAY DAY IN LENINGRAD 28 April—6 May
See the May Day Parade on Palace Square, with a full sightseeing programme, accommodation in Trade Union hotels, return air travel.
Inclusive price £129.

SPECIALIST STUDY TOURS TO THE USSR
"Country Standard" tour to Moscow, Kiev and Kharkov. 27 May—10 June.
Full sightseeing programme in all centres, including visits to state farms, agricultural machinery factories and meetings with trade unionists.
Fully inclusive £225.

Soviet Sports Tour, Moscow, Minsk and Leningrad. 26 August—8 September.
This pre-Olympics tour includes visits to sports stadiums, football, gymnastics and athletics clubs, a sports boarding school and general sightseeing in all centres.
Inclusive price £238.

SUMMER TOURS TO THE GDR
Trade Union Friendship Holidays.
Fifteen day tours throughout the summer to the Baltic Coast, Thueringian Forest, Saxon Switzerland and other centres. Full board, accommodation, sightseeing, scheduled air travel. All tours include 2 days in Berlin.
Only £174.

GDR Youth Tour. 19 July—2 August.
Visiting Berlin and the new Youth Holiday Centre on the *Scharmuetzel* Lake.
Fully inclusive £145.

German Language Course to Berlin and Dresden. 2—23 August.
Intensive tuition, return air travel, full board, cultural visits and sightseeing.
Inclusive price £228.

PROGRESSIVE TOURS LTD.
12 Porchester Place, Marble Arch, London W2 2BS. Tel: 01-262 1676, Telex 25135.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED